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Josué de Castro's Geografia Combatente and the political ecology of hunger

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**Josué de Castro's *Geografia Combatente*
and the political ecology of hunger**

Archie Davies

PhD in Geography at King's College London

April 2019

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Note on Translations and Referencing

Except where texts are cited in translation, all translations are my own.

The thesis uses a Chicago referencing system, with footnotes. The footnotes refer to the complete reference list in the Appendix. To facilitate reference to the footnotes, this list is organized alphabetically within author cited.

In addition to the complete reference list, there is also a separate list of all archival sources consulted, many of which appear in the complete reference list, and some of which are provided for further information.

The Appendixes also contain a list of Castro's major publications, organized by date, and a list of publications of his major works in translation and works published outside Brazil, organized by country of publication.

Tem que se treinar, tem que se informar, tem que saber para onde corre o rio, não é? Tem que seguir o leito assim, tem que estar informado. Tem que saber quem é Josué de Castro, rapaz.

[You've got to train yourself up, you've got to inform yourself, you've got to know where the river runs, right? You've got to follow the river bed, you've got to be informed. You've got to know who Josué de Castro is, man.]

Chico Science, 1995¹

Acho que pó Josué foi um gênio

[I think old Josué was a genius]

Milton Santos, 1998²

Eu sei o que é passar fome. Quando eu falo da fome não é porque eu li '*Geografia da Fome*' do Josué de Castro. Eu cito a fome, porque passei fome. – Lula, sobre a guerra contra a fome e a miséria que foram alicerces durante seu governo. [#LulaPresidente](#)

[I know what it is to be hungry. When I talk about hunger it's not because I've read Geografia da Fome by Josué de Castro. I talk about hunger because I've been through hunger] – Lula, on the war against hunger and poverty that were the foundation stones of his governments. #LulaPresidente]

@Lulaoficial, 6.01am, 21st August 2018³

¹ Anonymous, 'Chico Science Fala Sobre Josué de Castro'.

² Santos, 'Entrevista explosiva'.

³ @lulaoficial, 'Eu Sei o Que é Passar Fome'.

Introduction

Introduction: A Combatant Geography

Opening with these epigraphs is to reach guiltily for the cheesy chips of hagiography and homage. Yet, like Chico Science, Milton Santos and Lula, from their very different positions, I am deliberate in speaking about Josué de Castro in these terms. In 1995 Chico Science was in his late twenties and one of Brazil's most famous musicians, the face and brain of the musical movement *mangue beat*, an afrocyberdelic crush of hip-hop, funk and Northeastern



Figure 1: Josué de Castro. Photograph: Conteúdo Estadão. Source: memorialdademocracia.com.br

maracatu. *Mangue beat* insisted on the cultural dynamism of the urban Northeast of Brazil, symbolized by the scuttling, scrabbling, ironic survivalism of the crab and the biological and cultural diversity of its urban mangrove forests. With his feet in the mud of Recife's river Capibaribe, Chico Science called Josué de Castro, the Recife writer and geographer, who died in 1973, the intellectual figurehead of this youthful, politically confrontational counterculture. Milton Santos was speaking in 1998, aged 72, as a professor in São Paulo, the most prominent geographer in Brazil and a significant public intellectual. In a sweeping, synoptic interview with a group of younger geographers, during which he reflected on his work and the state of Brazilian disciplinary, political and intellectual life, he called Josué de Castro a lost genius at the base of critical geography. Lula, another Northeasterner, positions Castro's work at the *alicerces*, the foundations, of the Workers' Party's thirteen years of government. Chico Science died in a car crash in 1997 at the height of his fame. Milton Santos passed away in 2001 as the *éminence grise* of Brazilian geography. Lula is behind bars. The ongoing relevance, in Brazil of 2019, of the cultural politics of diversity, independent critical thought and political resistance to imperialism and inequality could hardly be greater. Their proclamations of Josué de Castro's legacy were assertions of the existence and power of an autochthonous, counter-hegemonic history of critical thought and praxis emerging from the Northeast of Brazil. This is a geographical discourse embedded in the material social reality of the Northeast, and irreducibly central to global histories of knowledge.

Castro trained as a doctor but became a nutritional scientist and then a geographer, politician and international diplomat. Above all, he sought to demonstrate that hunger was a social, not a natural condition. His innovative, anti-colonial work can be seen as a precursor to political ecology. Exiled in 1964 by the military dictatorship, Castro died in Paris, as a professor at the University of Vincennes, in 1973. A ‘loyal and permanent militant of humanism’⁴, his academic reputation has waxed in the last two decades in Brazil as not only a scholar of hunger, but an inspiration for social movements and a leading interpreter of Brazilian social reality in the 20th century⁵.

As Jacqueline Rose reasoned, ‘you read a historic writer not for what they failed to see, not for the ideological blindspots of their writing [...] but for the as-yet-unlived, still shaping history which their vision—which must mean the limitations of that vision—partially, tentatively, foresees and provokes’⁶. It is in this sense that this thesis goes back to an anti-colonial geographer from the South. I use ‘the South’, after Walter Mignolo and Enrique Dussel, ‘not, of course, [as] a simple geographic location but a “metaphor for human suffering under global capitalism”’⁷. In writing about Josué de Castro, the preposition ‘from’ is itself inconclusive. He was from Brazil, from the Northeast, from Recife, from Madalena by the Capibaribe⁸, but he also wrote from Geneva, Paris, Naples and Rome.

I go back to Josué de Castro not to find new answers to old questions, but to expand disciplinary horizons, contest accepted histories of thought and offer views along paths not taken. As Neil Smith put it in 1988, ‘the “history of geographic thought” [...] should by any and all standards be one of the most intellectually stimulating branches of the discipline’⁹. I hold to this enthusiasm while, like Smith¹⁰, treating the boundaries of the sub-discipline as extremely flexible. I work from the premise that we can still learn from reading – closely, contextually, tangentially – an old geographer for his insights, and use Castro’s theory and praxis to investigate the material and imperial histories of geographical ideas. I aim to be both grounded and expansive in this reading, neither anachronistic nor hagiographic. I use Castro’s biography and his work to explore theoretical, as well as historical, problematics in geographical thought and, in particular, political ecology. I go beyond biography, and the history of geography, to attempt to rethink some of political ecology’s core concerns from the perspective of a Pernambucan geographer and the spaces in which his work emerged.

⁴ Clodomir, ‘Josué de Castro: Brasileiro e Cidadão Do Mundo [Josué de Castro: Brazilian and Citizen of the World]’.

⁵ See for instance Magalhães, *Fome: uma (re)leitura de Josué de Castro [Hunger: a (re)reading of Josué de Castro]*; Andrade et al., ‘Josué de Castro e o Brasil’; Silva, ‘Josué de Castro’.

⁶ Said, Freud and the Non-European, 67.

⁷ Mignolo, ‘The Geopolitics of Knowledge and the Colonial Difference’, 66.

⁸ Silva, ‘Josué por ele mesmo: o diário’, 55.

⁹ Smith, ‘For a History of Geography’, 159.

¹⁰ In, for example, Smith, *American Empire*.

I read Castro as an early example of a Third World political ecology¹¹ because his geographical theory and praxis put political and economic power at the core of an analysis of the uneven distribution of resources. For Castro, the human always exists in relationship to their particular geographical context, above all through the mechanism of food as an active relationship with the environment¹². In this relationship humans suffer not because an abstract ‘nature’ cannot provide, but because social relations structure unequal access to resources. It is in this sense that his geography of hunger is perhaps most immediately recognisable to contemporary anglophone geographers as a *political ecology* of hunger¹³. Perhaps more importantly, his work is part of a Third Worldist tradition which speaks, in Enrique Dussel’s terms, from an ‘epistemological location, that of the victims, the south of the planet, the oppressed, the excluded, new popular movements, ancestral people colonized by Modernity, by globalized capitalism’¹⁴. Castro’s work takes its place in the Third Worldist thought that the Mexican political theorist Enrique Leff has described as ‘a discursive amalgam between academic and political actors, between theoretical thought, participatory research and the imaginaries of the peoples, in alliance with resistance movements and their emancipatory strategies [...] historically, theoretically and politically committed to a sustainable future and other possible worlds’¹⁵. Dussel, Leff and Mignolo are re-purposing Third Worldist histories for a particular Latin American project. Nevertheless, ‘Third Worldist’ captures the historical and geographical specificity of Castro’s work and although he did not use the term from the beginning of his writing, by the end of his career it was a crucial framework¹⁶. However, more than just Third Worldist, more specifically I read Castro as an anti-imperialist and anti-colonial geographer¹⁷. He practiced a counter-hegemonic politics at many scales: struggling against hunger in the Northeast, in Brazil and internationally. Castro’s own trajectory threads tricontinentalism, anti-colonialism and Third Worldism together. His was, as Manuel Correia de Andrade put it, a *geografia combatente* – a combatant geography or, better, a militant geography¹⁸. Andrade’s formulation suggests Castro’s place in an alternative history of geography: a militant geography as against Felix Driver’s history of ‘geography militant’, the handmaiden of imperialism and state

¹¹ Prior to, and in many senses distinct from Bryant and Bailey, *Third World Political Ecology*.

¹² See also Castro, *Ensaio de biologia social*, 39–41.

¹³ Eg the access to resource frameworks found in Peluso, *Violent Environments*.

¹⁴ Dussel, 549–50.

¹⁵ Leff, ‘Power-Knowledge Relations in the Field of Political Ecology’, 237.

¹⁶ Albuquerque, ‘Tercer Mundo y Tercermundismo En Brasil’; See also for example Castro, ‘De Bandung a Nova Dehli’.

¹⁷ Andrade, ‘Josué de Castro e Uma Geografia Combatente’; Ferretti and Viotto Pedrosa, ‘Inventing Critical Development’; Ferretti, ‘Decolonizing the Northeast: Brazilian Subalterns, Non-European Heritages, and Radical Geography in Pernambuco’.

¹⁸ Andrade, ‘Josué de Castro e Uma Geografia Combatente’.

expansion¹⁹. Castro's is a geography in alliance with popular movements against colonial oppression, not in alliance with the colonialist impulse and imperial states that foster it.

I follow Nik Heynen in arguing that political ecology and, by extension, critical geography, needs to develop an abolitionist, anti-colonial bent. He suggests that this 'necessitates drawing on work outside for the sake of growth'²⁰. Slightly differently, by positioning Castro's work within an expanded field of political ecology, I suggest we can find the anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism the field needs in its own history. This presupposes expanding political ecology beyond disciplinary and linguistic confines. A loose conception of political ecology draws from work that expands the epistemological frameworks of knowledge claims over the relations between space, power and politicized environments²¹. I hope to contribute to work that 'decolonizes' geography through a historical attention to the flows of influence, power and translation in the history of geographical ideas that fractures and multiplies the canonical in human geography²².

Producing more emancipatory geographical knowledges, and more emancipatory conditions of possibility for geographical knowledge production, is not as simple as valorising the work of anti-colonial geographers, or geographers from the South. Nevertheless, thinking deeply through the history of geography from the south, and with the work of anti-colonial geographers from the past can be part of a wider menu of theoretical and practical interventions seeking to fracture Anglo-European hegemony and open the discipline towards a political and intellectual future oriented towards liberation. The Sista Resista collective have recently emphasized the dangers of empty appropriation of the terms of decolonization²³, and Sam Halvorsen has recently argued that the exchange of knowledge is deeply unequal, and attended by 'epistemic expropriation'²⁴. Certainly, there are very significant theoretical, political and epistemological challenges raised by attempts to 'decolonize' the discipline²⁵. In spite of these problematics of audience, institutionality, the geopolitics of knowledge, and expropriation, I proceed on the basis that multiplying intellectual histories can open more space for radical critique, offer new concepts, and enact an egalitarian politics of knowledge production.

I share Juliet Fall's conviction that 'it matters how and where we do things as geographers. It matters where ideas come from and then where people think about, discuss, and publish them. It matters where

¹⁹ Driver, *Geography Militant*.

²⁰ Heynen, 'Urban Political Ecology II', 840.

²¹ Loftus, 'Political Ecology I', 1–2.

²² Orsini and Srivastava, 'Translation and the Postcolonial'; Keighren, Abrahamsson, and della Dora, 'On Canonical Geographies'.

²³ Resista, 'Is Decolonizing the New Black?'

²⁴ Halvorsen, 'Cartographies of Epistemic Expropriation'.

²⁵ Esson et al., 'The 2017 RGS-IBG Chair's Theme'; Jazeel, 'Mainstreaming Geography's Decolonial Imperative'.

ideas are read, how they are spread, how they get picked up, and where they are ignored'²⁶. Through her concept of 'disciplinary Orientalism' she argues that geography 'both draws heavily from foreign critical thinkers, often removed from the spaces of debate they are/were writing in, and simultaneously ignores foreign geographical traditions and contributions'²⁷. The case of Castro falls into both halves of this simultaneity. On the one hand, where he is referred to in anglophone geography it is without being embedded in a political context, and on the other hand the Brazilian, and more specifically Northeastern, tradition of which he is a part is rigorously ignored in the mainstream of anglophone geography.

In the rest of this introduction, I do three things. Firstly, I outline the way in which Castro's life and work has been archived, canonized and scrutinized up to now, lay out my methodology and analyse the archives with which I have worked. I also present an overview of existing academic work on Josué de Castro. This leads me, secondly, to a consideration of the question of biography in the history of geography, and an analysis of its scope and limits as a methodological and historiographical approach. Finally, I position my thesis in the context of ongoing debates about decolonizing geography and its connection with questions of language and translation. I attempt to connect these crucial guide-poles of my work to the problematics of generating an anti-colonial mode of thought in political ecology and critical geography.

A. Archives and Canonization

Castro's life and work is available as an object of study thanks to two, at times contradictory, practices: publishing and archiving. He was both published and archived during his lifetime, and after his death. Both kinds of practice have been conducted in uneven, at times confusing, ways. I will come to terms with some of the histories of publishing Castro in Chapter Three, but here I outline the processes of archiving²⁸ to which his life and work have been subject²⁹. For this thesis I have drawn on archives in Recife, Rio de Janeiro, Buenos Aires, Paris, Rome and Berlin. The most important single site has been Josué de Castro's own archive, now housed at the *Fundação Joaquim Nabuco* (commonly known as the Fundaj) in Recife, in the Northeast of Brazil. Most of the archive was previously housed at the *Centro Josué de Castro* which was founded in Recife in 1979. There a group of scholars and activists sought to maintain and repair Castro's legacy, much of which had been lost during the dictatorship which expelled him, and which limited references to, and study of, his work until its loosening and eventual collapse in the 1980s. During my research in Recife in 2017 the latter – housed in the centre

²⁶ Fall, 'Reading Claude Raffestin', 174.

²⁷ Fall, 173; See also Hubbard, Kitchin, and Valentine, 'Editors' Reply to Book Review Forum'.

²⁸ Withers, 'Constructing "the Geographical Archive"'.

²⁹ Amorim, "'Arquivar a Própria Vida"'.

of the city near where he was born – was largely closed, retaining only a proportion of memorabilia of Castro's life. During its heyday, however, the Centre itself produced important work not only on Castro, but on the Northeast of Brazil. The Fundaj, on the other hand, was founded in 1949 by Gilberto Freyre, and is perhaps the leading historical research centre in the Northeast of Brazil. Their stewardship of the Castro archive has come about due to the slow waning of the *Centro Josué de Castro*. The Fundaj's archival collections are part of the consolidation of its authority as a gatekeeper to research on the history of the Northeast. The fact that Castro's archive has been subsumed into this wider collection has upsides and downsides: it enables researchers to place the Castro archive in a context of a broader collection of important documents relating to the Northeast – from photographic archives to various collected personal papers – but it to some extent homogenizes the idiosyncratic nature of Castro's own archive, whose texture must have been somewhat different in the original context of the *Centro Josué de Castro*.

The archive comprises around 30,000 documents relating to Castro's life³⁰. They were largely collated by Castro's wife, Glauce, but with assistance not only from Castro himself before his death, but friends in the years after. The archive constitutes an important part of Castro's own self-fashioning, and is an increasingly important part of his legacy. The archive was finally transferred to the Fundaj in 2013 and made available for researchers there. Castro's library, of around 9,000 volumes, is still in the process of being organized for research³¹. The archive is made up of a wide variety of different types of documents. Three forms predominate: newspaper clippings, correspondence and manuscript drafts. However, there are also minutes of meetings, university course outlines and students' essays, notebooks, annotated drafts of speeches and more. The archive houses some remarkable documents – a telegram sent to Castro by the Cuban government the morning after the Bay of Pigs invasion – and some funny ones – a sardonic note to the editor of *Time* magazine – but it inevitably contains much of what Brent Hayes Edwards calls 'the inexorable production of the ordinary'³². Whilst the archive has an index, it is often inaccurate and incomplete, so the process of research produces unexpected synergies and many scraps of texts which are difficult to date, place and, in many cases, identify.

I consulted a number of other archives in Brazil in order to corroborate some of the issues raised by the personal archive, as well as in search of broader history and context. The Pernambuco State archives in Recife are underfunded, but extremely fruitful, sources. In particular the various urban reform projects discussed in Chapter Two from the 1940s have a rich archive there. These were complemented by the very professional archive of the Museum of Recife. The cartographic and historic expertise of the Museum's curator, Sandro Vasconcelos, was of central importance to my understanding of the spatial

³⁰ Amorim, "Um pequeno pedaço do incomensurável".

³¹ Amorim, "Arquivar a Própria Vida", 139–40.

³² Edwards, 'Taste', 946.

history of Recife. The cartographic holdings of the *Biblioteca Nacional* and historical files of *the Estado Novo* (1937-45) in the *Fundação Getúlio Vargas* in Rio complemented this research. The history of Recife and its governments is present in the texture and construction of the archives themselves: the authoritarian impulses of the *Estado Novo* went along with a greater rigour of archival record collection than the more democratic governments on either side of it³³.

In Recife, in addition to the archives mentioned, I spent time working in the *Instituto Miguel Arraes*, a research collection housed in the former home of the influential governor of Pernambuco, mayor of Recife and interlocutor of Castro, Miguel Arraes de Alencar. Arraes made a victorious return to Northeastern politics. He returned from exile after the amnesty in 1979 and won five elections, including being elected Governor of Pernambuco twice³⁴. His avuncular persona and commitment to agrarian reform shored up a base of rural support, allied with the urban working class vote³⁵. Whilst there are dozens of metres of files relating to his second and third terms in office, the first period of his governorship – 1962-64, a crucial period in the history of Pernambuco – and his period as mayor (1959-62) are much more sparsely represented. Some of the surviving documents nevertheless prove useful for wider urban and regional histories of the Northeast. A relatively small archive at the *Instituto de Nutrição Josué de Castro*, now part of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, contains a complete collection *Os Arquivos Brasileiros de Nutrição* which Castro edited in the 1940s. They provide a fascinating insight into the development of the discipline of nutrition in Brazil and Latin America. There is also a small but perfectly formed archive of the equivalent institution in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Such small archives are invaluable resources for histories of disciplinary knowledge. I consulted the archive of some of the public health institutions founded by Castro in Rio de Janeiro, held at the Federal University of the State of Rio de Janeiro (UNIRIO). For the later chapters of this thesis a number of other archives have been invaluable. Both the rich FAO archive in Rome and the archive of the *Centre International pour le Développement*, the think tank Castro established in Paris, now held at *La Contemporaine* institute at the University of Paris, Nanterre, housed important materials.

The archives I have not been able to access are also part of this story. Castro was an inveterate launcher of projects and maker of plans³⁶. This was doubtlessly one of the strengths which led to his varied output and influence across an amazing number of contexts. But I have lost count of the number of unfinished book projects Castro declared to have underway, particularly in the later parts of his life. Some of these projects are identifiable in the archive, but others appear either lost, or at least I have not been able to

³³ Sandro Vasconcelos, Personal Discussion, Recife, March 2017.

³⁴ Pereira, *The End of the Peasantry*, 121–25.

³⁵ This style and the forms of cleavage underpinning Brazilian mass politics are satirized in *cinema novo*. Robert Stam (public discussion, 'Hunger for the Absolute', Tate Modern, November 2017) suggests that Glauber Rocha used Arraes as the blueprint for the figure of Vieira in his seminal 1967 film *Terra em Transe*.

³⁶ See Silva, 'Josué por ele mesmo: o diário'.

find them. Ill health helps to explain some of the abandoned projects, while the abandonment of others remains obscure. Whilst the Castro archive in the Fundaj is extremely extensive, it remains partial. For instance, Castro kept a diary in the 1950s which would be an extremely valuable resource for further historical research. One Brazilian researcher – Tania Elias Magno da Silva – has had access to the family archive, for a limited period of time, which is held by Josué de Castro’s daughter, Ana Maria de Castro³⁷. I have not been able to consult the diary, which is part of a personal archive held by the Castro family in two sections: one with his daughter Ana Maria which contains letters and photographs, and another with his son Josué Fernando de Castro which contains honorary doctorates and other titles³⁸. Other archives on his life which have remained closed to me include the *Delegacia de Ordem Política e Social* (DOPS), the secret police in Brazil. It seems likely that there is a file on Castro, but I was not given access to DOPS files in Recife or Rio de Janeiro, being told that they were in the process of digitization. They have not yet been released.

Thanks to his internationally mobile, élite, masculine, middle class status, and his lifelong engagement with institutions of various kinds, Castro left behind a significant archive. There is, on the other hand, an overwhelming paucity of material related to subaltern voices in the history of Recife and the wider Northeast. This has raised a significant challenge for this thesis not least because Castro sought to speak for the marginalized and oppressed, but the voices of the marginalized and oppressed continue to be subject to violence in the archive, and their erasure by it and from it³⁹. Innovative projects have sought to access peasant⁴⁰ and urban⁴¹ histories in various ways⁴², but this remains a serious challenge. This is not only due to the lack of production of lasting archives from the ephemeral groups resisting state practices of erasure, but also due to direct oppression and destruction of archives. Throughout the period under investigation the Northeast of Brazil was mired in fluctuating waves of, in particular, anti-communist hysteria. This led to the destruction and repression of subaltern knowledge production. For instance – although clearly not any kind of ‘authoritative’ or ‘representative’ voice for the oppressed – the communist aligned *Folha do Povo* newspaper was periodically banned. Its archive remains partial and restricted, with only some parts of the runs of publication available for consultation in Recife. Other voices were doubtlessly also silenced.

³⁷ See Silva, ‘Josué por ele mesmo: o diário’. However, it is worth noting that Silva’s access was also constrained, so hopefully a fuller consideration will one day be possible. (Personal Communication, March 2017).

³⁸ Amorim, “‘Arquivar a Própria Vida’”, 141.

³⁹ Hartman, ‘Venus in Two Acts’.

⁴⁰ See for example Dabat, *Moradores de Engenho*; Rogers, *The Deepest Wounds*.

⁴¹ Leite, ‘Recife Dos Morros e Córregos’; Gominho, ‘Percorrendo’.

⁴² Pereira, *The End of the Peasantry*, xx.

Research in historical geography in English is just beginning to emerge on Josué de Castro⁴³. Eric Carter has explored his part in mid-century debates over population control, and Federico Ferretti and Breno Viotto Pedrosa have placed Castro in a tradition of critical geography from the South, alongside two other Northeasterners: Manuel Correia de Andrade and Milton Santos⁴⁴. Ferretti has also begun to explore the broader school of ‘Recife geographers’ who picked up and developed Castro’s legacy in highly significant ways⁴⁵. There has also been some attention to Castro’s work in anglophone anthropology, most significantly by Nancy Scheper-Hughes, who saw her epic analysis of hunger in Northeast Brazil, *Death Without Weeping* (1989), as inheriting Castro’s mantle⁴⁶. Meanwhile, Castro has long been an important figure in Brazilian geography and political thinking in Portuguese, particularly in Recife and the Northeast. Renato Carneiro do Nascimento has argued that his reception has passed through four phases⁴⁷. The first phase was during the democratic opening of Brazil in the 1970s and 80s, when Castro was written about as a significant figure in establishing the area of connection between medicine, public health and the social sciences. Secondly, an institutional upsurge of interest in Castro and the mapping of hunger developed in the early 1990s. Thirdly, Castro was brought to prominence with the advent of the Lula government, who used him as an intellectual and political figurehead of the *Zero Fome* [Zero Hunger] project both at home⁴⁸ and abroad⁴⁹. Indeed, even in the most recent campaign for the Presidency – very shortly before he finally dropped out of the running due to his ongoing imprisonment – Lula deployed Josué de Castro. Releasing a video about hunger, he said ‘when I talk about hunger, I don’t do it because I’ve read *A Geografia da Fome* by Josué de Castro. I talk about hunger, because I’ve experienced hunger’⁵⁰. In denying his reading of Castro, Lula deploys a Castroian idea, that knowledge of hunger is visceral and immanent. It recalls Castro’s own insistence that ‘it was not at the Sorbonne, or at any other seat of learning, that I came to know the anatomy of hunger, but rather in the marshy land of the poor parts of Recife’⁵¹. Nascimento sees a resurgence in academic interest in the late 2000s, with the hundredth anniversary of Castro’s birth. His work has also recently been used in studies

⁴³ Ferretti, ‘Geographies of Internationalism’, 1 March 2018; Ferretti and Viotto Pedrosa, ‘Inventing Critical Development’; Carter, ‘Population Control’.

⁴⁴ See also Buckley, *Technocrats*.

⁴⁵ Ferretti, ‘Decolonizing the Northeast: Brazilian Subalterns, Non-European Heritages, and Radical Geography in Pernambuco’.

⁴⁶ Scheper-hughes, *Death Without Weeping*.

⁴⁷ Nascimento, ‘O Resgate Da Obra de Josué de Castro’.

⁴⁸ Suplicy, ‘Programa Fome Zero Do Presidente Lula e as Perspectivas Da Renda Básica de Cidadania No Brasil [Zero Hunger Programme of President Lula and the Perspectives of Basic Citizen’s Income in Brazil]’.

⁴⁹ Fraundorfer, *Brazil’s Global Fight against Hunger and Poverty*, 86–131; Lula da Silva, ‘Twenty-Ninth McDougall Memorial Lecture’; Santos, ‘Da Geografia da Fome ao Fome Zero’.

⁵⁰ @lulaoficial, ‘Eu Sei o Que é Passar Fome’.

⁵¹ Castro, *Of Men and Crabs*, ix.

of urban space, nature⁵², everyday life⁵³, and history, particularly in Recife, where a distinct wave of research has focused on Castro's influence on the city's early 1990s *Manguebeat* musical movement⁵⁴. More recent academic research has explored Castro's work in terms of the history of hunger in Brazil⁵⁵ and his involvement in public policy in his lifetime⁵⁶, as well its later influences on connections to Brazilian State and civil society action on hunger in the 80s and 90s⁵⁷.

Much Brazilian work on Castro can be seen as attempts at recovering his legacy, and pushing forward a canonization of his work both within Brazilian geography and Brazilian twentieth century history more broadly. Since his death in 1973 we can identify a mini-genre of collections, articles and books in Portuguese specifically setting out to formalize Castro's legacy. These really began during Castro's own lifetime with the publication of a collection of essays on his work to coincide with his fiftieth birthday⁵⁸. The re-edition of *Geografia da Fome* in 1981 was an opportunity for Castro's work to be re-considered, and Manuel Correia de Andrade, working in Recife, took up the strands of Castro's work not only in academic but public and political circles⁵⁹. This was intimately connected with Andrade's own long-term project to understand the agrarian economy of the Northeast, and, through a politically engaged geographical practice, to advocate for radical land reform in Brazil. Ten years after Castro's death, in 1983, events in Pernambuco began to rehearse some of Castro's core contributions in terms of a politics of anti-hunger⁶⁰. In 1985 a series of symposia were held across Brazil which led to the book *As Raízes da Fome*, [The Roots of Hunger]⁶¹. It includes contributions from important Brazilian and international scholars, and continues the debate on underdevelopment and hunger through a focus on the contemporary nutritional situation in Brazil. Work in the 1980s was still sporadic, but the Brazilian National Library's 'International year of Josué de Castro' in 1993 led to further attention⁶², and in the course of the 1990s in Brazil Castro became more recognized both inside and outside the academy. Irina Guimarães, for example, wrote a special supplement on Castro for the *Jornal do Commercio* in Rio de Janeiro in 1997, seeking to introduce him to the reading public as, in what she says are Darcy

⁵² Castilho, 'Água e Espaço'.

⁵³ Carvalho, 'O pão nosso'.

⁵⁴ Galinsky, *Maracatu Atômico*; Lima, 'Universo dobrado a um canto'; Ucella and Lima, 'O Maracatu Afrociberdólico de Chico Science e Nação Zumbi [Afrociberdelic Maracatu of Chico Science and Nação Zumbi]'.

⁵⁵ See for example Vasconcelos, 'Do Homem-Caranguejo Ao Homem-Gabiru'.

⁵⁶ Amorim, 'Em Tempos'; Amorim, 'Entre o Intelectual e o Político'; Amorim, "'Sete Palcos de Terra e Um Caixão'"; Bizzo, 'Ação política'.

⁵⁷ Magalhães, *Fome: uma (re)leitura de Josué de Castro* [Hunger: a (re)reading of Josué de Castro].

⁵⁸ Herédia and Barros, *O Drama Universal Da Fome*.

⁵⁹ Ferretti, 'Decolonizing the Northeast: Brazilian Subalterns, Non-European Heritages, and Radical Geography in Pernambuco'.

⁶⁰ Andrade, 'Lembrada morte do pensador'.

⁶¹ Minayo, *As Raízes Da Fome*.

⁶² *Jornal do Commercio*. Rio de Janeiro. Saturday, 27th March 1993.

Ribeiro's words, as 'the most luminous Brazilian intelligence of the twentieth century'⁶³. More recent examples are *Josué de Castro e o Brasil* [Josué de Castro and Brazil] organized by Manuel Correia de Andrade in 2003⁶⁴, Tania Elias Magno da Silva's edited collection in the series *Memória do saber*⁶⁵ [Memories of Knowledge], Bernardo Mançano Fernandes and Carlos Walter Porto Gonçalves' *Josué de Castro: Vida e Obra*, [Josué de Castro: Life and Work]⁶⁶, a book produced for the *Movimento Sem Terra*, *Josué de Castro: Semeador de Ideias* [Josué de Castro: Planter of Ideas]⁶⁷, and one published by the Brazilian Chamber of Deputies on his political career⁶⁸. A number of websites also now present Castro's life and work⁶⁹, providing bibliographical material as well as photographic and film archives. Silvio Tendler's *A Cidadão do Mundo* [The Citizen of the World]⁷⁰ collates many remarkable interviews – from Dom Helder Câmara to former President of Portugal Mario Soares – discussing Castro's impact and oeuvre. In 2009, a French colloquium and edited collection celebrated the centenary of his birth⁷¹. These works pull up short of formal biography; they tend to include overviews of Castro's work, assessments of his impact, analysis of his ideas or chronological overviews of his life, and to emphasize how his work can be used in studies of hunger today.

Castro's legacy within Brazilian geographical thought has always been a question of struggle and insistence⁷², but the work outlined above, and Castro's entry in the first volume of the 2014 Dictionary of Brazilian Geographers edited by André Roberto Machado and Mônica Sampaio Martin suggests his place in the Brazilian geographical canon is now secure⁷³. Such canonization is in part a response to an earlier sense of loss after Castro's exile, and the banning of his books in Brazil. This had two dimensions: political repression of his work, and disavowal of its quality and relevance. Brazilian geography to a significant extent disowned his contribution, and even refused to recognize him as a geographer, and his work as geographical⁷⁴. Recent attempts at canonization, therefore, respond to

⁶³ Guimarães, 'Josué de Castro: Um Cientista Que Soube Amar Seu País'.

⁶⁴ Andrade et al., 'Josué de Castro e o Brasil'.

⁶⁵ Magno, Tânia Elias, *Memória Do Saber*.

⁶⁶ Fernandes and Gonçalves, *Josué de Castro*.

⁶⁷ Castro, *Semeador de Ideias*.

⁶⁸ Melo and Neves, *Josué de Castro*.

⁶⁹ www.projeto memoria.art.br ; www.josuedecastro.com.br

⁷⁰ Tendler, *Josué de Castro - Cidadão do Mundo*.

⁷¹ Bué and Plet, *Alimentation, environnement et santé: pour un droit à l'alimentation*.

⁷² Campos, 'A Presença Na Geografia de Josué de Castro'.

⁷³ Martin and Machado, *Dicionário Dos Geógrafos Brasileiros*.

⁷⁴ Ferretti and Viotto Pedrosa, 'Inventing Critical Development'; Nogueira, *Josué de Castro: A Fome e o Manguê*, 68.

previous marginalization. As Arnold Niskier put it, remembering Castro's work is a 'question of honour'⁷⁵.

Nevertheless, it is important to complicate the idea that disciplines function in straightforwardly national manners, and there is an important distinction to be drawn between Castro's Brazilian legacy, his Northeastern legacy, and his international legacy. In the rest of this thesis I am particularly interested in how these scales inter-relate. They are not nested in straightforward ways: regional disciplinary histories are implicated in international ones. Keighren et al ask whether a canon of human geography exists, what role it might play, and what the importance of the notion of the canon might be in understanding the history of geography⁷⁶. I propose that the process outlined above of canonizing Josué de Castro, and the analysis undertaken in the rest of this thesis (particularly in Chapter Three), shows that if the canon of human geography exists, it is multiple, and it has a geography. One way of approaching these historical geographies of knowledge is through biography.

B. Biography in Geography

Castro's life and ideas took unexpected turns, and emerged in unexpected places. I do not investigate his biography to tell a linear story, but to emphasize a constantly altering set of geographical concepts, positions and engagements with extremely variable outcomes in different scales, institutions and conversations. My approach attempts to understand how geographical ideas emerge unevenly across linguistic space. Keighren et al write that 'engagement with multilingual canonical texts can lead to the rediscovery of forgotten networks, alternative historiographies, and thus new ways of recounting geography's past [...] it can also lead [...] to new ways of engaging with the present and, more significantly, imagining and shaping possible futures'⁷⁷. By way of example they cite a body of internationalist geographical thinkers from the early 20th century – Reclus, Kropotkin, Penck, Geddes and Ghisleri – and suggest that these internationalist networks are worth pursuing. Castro can find a place in these networks: his trajectory from Pernambucan concerns to an avowedly globalist position by the 1960s is worth charting in part to understand the folds and flows and of internationalist exchange. His trajectory reveals, too, a particular moment at which visionary utopian projects to solve global hunger were underpinned by particular historical and geographical imaginations. Castro's work

⁷⁵ Niskier, 'Ano Internacional de Josué de Castro'.

⁷⁶ Keighren, Abrahamsson, and della Dora, 'On Canonical Geographies'.

⁷⁷ Keighren, Abrahamsson, and della Dora, 306.

connects this history with the disciplinary development of geography. It is the ‘situated messiness’⁷⁸ of Castro’s own biography that offers me a path through an alternative disciplinary history.

In this sense my thesis attempts to deploy a critical intellectual biography as a methodological starting point. The histories of these archives, and secondary texts, have led to an inevitably lopsided biographical and contextual understanding of Josué de Castro. Nevertheless, the thesis follows a well-trodden path of work in ‘lifepaths’ and biography in the history of geography⁷⁹. Along with cognate approaches, including network analysis⁸⁰, analysis of correspondence⁸¹ and autobiography⁸², this methodology works with the idea that ‘the arts of geography and biography are historically connected’⁸³. Long-standing and ongoing projects such as the *Geographers: Biobibliographical Studies* and the Sidaway and Johnston *Geography and Geographers: Anglo-American human geography since 1945* attest to this. As Juliet Fall and Claudio Minca have recently argued, biography can help internationalize the discipline and its history, can challenge its anglophone bias and can draw attention to the sites and places of the production of geographical knowledge⁸⁴. This is a long-standing project: for example, Anne Buttimer’s *The Practice of Geography* (1983), and her work for the IGU⁸⁵ on national geographical traditions was pushing, nearly forty years ago, for a broader understanding of the discipline through a focus on geographers’ biographies.

Scholars such as Avril Maddrell, Mona Domosh and Janice Monk have argued that a biographical approach can also challenge the masculinist history of the discipline, drawing attention not only to how geography has written its own history, but challenging who counts as a geographer – professional or otherwise – and how geographical knowledge is constructed⁸⁶. Gillian Rose calls on work in the history of geography to counteract the ‘spatialization of tradition as a transparent territory’⁸⁷. She argued that ‘how histories are articulated matters in relation to how current disciplinary practice, both theoretical and institutional, is produced’⁸⁸. The substance of Rose’s critique remains troubling for a disciplinary

⁷⁸ Livingstone, *The Geographical Tradition*; See also Livingstone, ‘In Defence of Situated Messiness’.

⁷⁹ Keighren, *Bringing Geography to Book*; Keighren et al., ‘Teaching the History of Geography’; Withers, ‘History and Philosophy of Geography 2004-2005’; Barnes, ‘Lives Lived and Lives Told’; Barnes, ‘History and Philosophy of Geography’.

⁸⁰ See for instance Featherstone, ‘Maritime Labour’.

⁸¹ Ferretti, ‘Correspondence’.

⁸² Ferretti, ‘Tropicality’; Lorimer, ‘Telling Small Stories’.

⁸³ Daniels and Nash, ‘Lifepaths’, 449.

⁸⁴ Fall and Minca, ‘Not a Geography of What Doesn’t Exist’, 544; See also Fall, ‘Reading Claude Raffestin’.

⁸⁵ See, for instance, her series of video interviews with geographers from non-anglophone traditions, discussing national geographical disciplines.

⁸⁶ See for example Domosh, ‘Toward a Feminist Historiography of Geography’; Maddrell, ‘Scientific Discourse and the Geographical Work of Marion Newbigin’; Monk, ‘Women, Gender, and the Histories of American Geography’.

⁸⁷ Rose, ‘Tradition and Paternity’, 415.

⁸⁸ Rose, 415.

history which seeks to take Castro seriously: this history is littered with men. Articulating the relationship between, for example, Milton Santos and Josué de Castro risks re-producing the ‘dutiful son’ model of academic masculinity which Rose exposes. It is not through bringing into anglophone disciplinary histories of geography a new counter-canon of female geographers that this thesis builds on feminist historiography. There would be a great deal to be gained from such work. As elsewhere, feminist thought and praxis has a particular history in Recife and Pernambuco that Patrícia Chaves and Elizabeth Severien trace back to the 1930s, with an upsurge in the 1980s through the creation of the *Casa da Mulher do Nordeste* [the House of the Woman of the Northeast]⁸⁹. In terms of Brazilian geography, for instance, the urban geographer Maria Adélia Aparecida de Souza⁹⁰, the Portuguese-Brazilian economic geographer Maria da Conceição de Almeida Tavares, the dependency theorist Vânia Bambirra and the Afro-Brazilian historian Beatriz Nascimento are all overdue consideration in anglophone academic enquiry. Nevertheless, there are good reasons – anti-colonialism, polylingualism, hunger – why it is important to place Castro’s work in dialogue with anglophone histories of geography. Indeed, one means of responding to feminist historiographies of geography is to fracture the disciplinary history of geography beyond its recognized spaces and texts, and into the messier realm of the history of geographical ideas. This is a more diffuse and complicated category. This does not suddenly open the door to a more equal geography: masculinist histories of knowledge are not so easily resolved. What it does suggest, however, is the importance of a broader field of praxis to the production of geographical knowledge.

Thinking about the life and work of Josué de Castro requires just such a move. His own relationship with the disciplinary history of geography was very explicit: he sought to intervene in the development of geographical ideas in association and dialogue with great geographical thinkers of the past, from all kinds of schools of thought and areas of the world, including North American and anglophone, but primarily French geography, as part of what José Borzacchiello da Silva calls French geography’s ‘hegemony’ in Brazil⁹¹. The intersections between Brazilian academic geography and anglophone geography have historically been more limited. For Johnston and Sidaway, anglophone geography was heavily influenced by French and German geography in the first half of the twentieth century, but became increasingly ‘trans-Atlantic’ in the second half of the twentieth century. Their argument is useful, methodologically, in using biography to trace disciplinary history, but it points to the blind spots of even postcolonial scholars in the discipline as what they call a ‘trans-Atlantic’ connection is to all

⁸⁹ Chaves and Severien, ‘O feminismo, as mulheres e a cidade em Pernambuco’.

⁹⁰ Though of a younger generation, Souza met Castro at UNESCO in Paris, introduced to him over lunch by Milton Santos. She has since worked on his legacy in Brazilian geography. See ‘As geografias de desigualdade: relendo a *Geografia da Fome*’ in Tania Elias Magno da Silva. *Memórias de um Saber*.

⁹¹ Silva, French-Brazilian Geography, 25–29.

intents and purposes a ‘North Atlantic’ one⁹². Castro was influenced by anglophone thought – some geographical, but more political and nutritional – and his geography was in deep dialogue with French traditions. Manuel Correia de Andrade and Milton Santos have both argued that Castro was not a fully signed up participant of the ‘Vidalian’ school of Brazilian geography, though he drew extensively upon it⁹³. In Santos’ words ‘within Geography his position was that of an authentic possibilist’⁹⁴.

Castro was also influenced by schools of thought way beyond disciplinary geography. He engaged with sociology, history and literature. Castro emphasized his debt to thinkers of hunger from the Northeast, including the political thinker, writer and politician, Rodolfo Teófilo and the novelist Rachel de Queiroz. Neither had much interest in the discipline of geography, but in Castro’s hands both are brought firmly within its purview. Castro was committed to moving geographical analysis out of disciplinary confines and into wider political, intellectual, and public discourse. For him geography was always *both* disciplinary and expansive. It is precisely this openness – and more specifically his attention to an ecological way of thinking⁹⁵ – which Manuel Correia de Andrade argued was Castro’s crucial inheritance for Brazilian geographical thought⁹⁶. Castro himself emphasized learning from the people of the marshes, novelists, the landscape and ecology. He is part of the long-term development of practices of resistance to forces of oppression, particularly over questions of land. Castro’s work was part of an earlier stream of scholars of underdevelopment and dependency which laid some of the ground for the scholarship associated with the Modernity/Coloniality/Decoloniality (MCD) paradigm⁹⁷. Given the wealth of research in this field, it is a propitious moment for work on Castro. The MCD work has very particular genealogies, strategies and conceptual frameworks which do not encompass the breadth of work that goes under the name of decolonization. The influence of Walter Dignolo, Enrique Dussel Aníbal Quijano, Catherine Walsh and Maria Lugones has brought a particular angle of attention on Latin American thought from scholars beyond the continent, but greater attention could be paid to the historical pathways of this school of thought, in which Castro is an interesting figure.

I treat Castro’s biography, therefore, as an instigation to take seriously a variety of geographical practices and geographical knowledge making, to add new textures and sources to the history of geography. I therefore read the scraps and fragments of Castro’s archive, as well as the polished tomes of his published output. Jazeel argues in favour of ‘present[ing] texts from different geographical origins

⁹² Johnston and Sidaway, ‘The Trans-Atlantic Connection’.

⁹³ Andrade, ‘Josué de Castro e Uma Geografia Combatente’, B-7.

⁹⁴ Santos, ‘Josué de Castro e a Geografia Da Fome’, 21.

⁹⁵ See Preface by André Mayer in Castro, *Géographie de la faim*.

⁹⁶ Andrade, ‘Josué de Castro e Uma Geografia Combatente’, B-7.

⁹⁷ Ferretti, ‘Decolonizing the Northeast: Brazilian Subalterns, Non-European Heritages, and Radical Geography in Pernambuco’.

to the Euro-American readership in ways that effectively realign the axis of global comparativism'⁹⁸. These texts can have many forms, and this process of realignment should be relational, in Gillian Hart's sense: different geographical knowledges are not hermetic, they have been produced in relation to one another. This involves realigning spatial imaginaries of where geographical thinking takes place, and the texts and contexts through which it does. Feminist geographers have laid out the need to do away with the fraternal/paternal schools of institutional knowledge production, and to recognize the multiple heritages of geographical knowledge understood as situated, multiple and gendered⁹⁹. This thesis attempts to enact these insistences, to make visible the spatialities and contradictions of tradition, and the hierarchies of knowledge production, and to find geographical theory in mobile and fragmented places. It nevertheless brings forward a male geographer whose notion of the political subject is masculinist. It therefore propagates a patrilineal history of geographical thought, by consolidating yet another male geographer's seat at the table. I try to take account of feminist critiques of the historiography of geography in various different ways, and to think through the feminist implications of a geography of hunger, but nevertheless this is a profound shortcoming in the design and structure of the thesis. In spite of this, and for its other values, I commit to telling this history of geography from the South, and from beyond the anglophone. So, while I hope this thesis and its biographical mode can disrupt the Euro-centrism of geographical canons, further, different work is needed which disrupts their patriarchy. Keighren argues that 'our shared goal as historians of geography should not be definitiveness but nuance; our task is not to agree a particular narrative, but to disrupt established accounts and to find new ways of telling our stories'¹⁰⁰. Thinking with Castro and his legacy seeks to contribute to that project.

C. Anti-colonial geography and translation

As I noted at the outset, one of my key intentions is to position Castro as an anti-colonial geographer: the bearer of a militant geography. I do so with the goal of fracturing the dominant monolingual and Eurocentric tendencies of the anglophone discipline. This raises questions not only of language and translation, but of disciplinarity and epistemology. In anglophone geography there is a long-standing school of postcolonial geography¹⁰¹, increasing interest in subaltern studies¹⁰², and deepening

⁹⁸ Jazeel, 'Between Area and Discipline', 661.

⁹⁹ Rose, 'Tradition and Paternity'.

¹⁰⁰ Keighren, *Bringing Geography to Book*, 4:7–8.

¹⁰¹ Sidaway, 'Postcolonial Geographies'; Nash, 'Cultural Geography'; Sluyter, *Colonialism and Landscape*; Radcliffe, 'Development and Geography'; Craggs, 'Postcolonial Geographies'.

¹⁰² Roy, 'Slumdog Cities'; Jazeel, 'Subaltern Geographies'; Featherstone, 'Space, Subalternity'.

deployment and investigation of decolonial approaches¹⁰³. While drawing on all of these in different ways, I want to emphasize their distinction from anti-colonial thought. This particular framework has a much less rich geographical sub-field. We can point to anarchist geographers as a distinctive element of this history. Castro drew on both Élisée Reclus¹⁰⁴ and Peter Kropotkin who, as Simon Springer put it, ‘demonstrated long ago that geography lends itself well to emancipatory ideas’¹⁰⁵, and who both wrote about hunger in different ways. Here I want to emphasize the mid-twentieth century projects with which anti-colonial theory is imbricated. While the anti-colonial is often elided with the decolonial¹⁰⁶, I argue that anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism can be held as distinctive modes of thinking and practice with particular histories and geographies separate from, alongside, prior to, and distinct from not only decolonial thought, but postcolonial theory and the Black radical tradition. I prefer to retain a distinction in order to, for instance, discriminate between the tri-continental geographies of African anti-colonial thought of (for instance) Aimé Césaire and Frantz Fanon (both born in Martinique), and the particular Latin American genealogies of decolonial thought, specifically those emerging from various Amerindian worldviews and anti-imperialist movements in the twentieth century. There are many extremely important overlaps – the Atlantic trajectories of Paulo Freire and WEB Du Bois being two examples, and the history of dependency theory being another – but holding these traditions apart, if only for analytical purposes, can give a clearer sense of their different scales and modes of theory and praxis.

Anti-colonialism’s historical connection to struggles over the nation state and pan-Africanist modes of internationalism¹⁰⁷, and its particular historical geographies of solidarity and praxis¹⁰⁸, can be more productively put into dialogue with the pedagogical and communal inheritances of decolonial thought¹⁰⁹, or the anarchist roots of some anti-colonial thought¹¹⁰, if we do not entirely blur them. Certainly, it is important to distinguish these approaches from post-colonial (or postcolonial) thought, with its own (often Indian sub-continental) histories and its particular contributions to questions of representation, discourse and histories of cultural practice¹¹¹. There are hugely important intersections – Edward Said was both part of the rootstock of postcolonial criticism and an important anti-colonial

¹⁰³ Radcliffe, ‘Decolonising Geographical Knowledges’; Esson et al., ‘The 2017 RGS-IBG Chair’s Theme’; Halvorsen, ‘Decolonising Territory’.

¹⁰⁴ Castro, *Geografia Da Fome: O Dilema Brasileiro: Pão Ou Aço*, 31–32.

¹⁰⁵ Springer, ‘Anarchism! What Geography Still Ought To Be’, 1613.

¹⁰⁶ See for instance Maldonado-Torres, ‘On the Coloniality of Being’, 261–62.

¹⁰⁷ Reza, ‘African Anti-Colonialism and the Ultramarinos of the Casa Dos Estudantes Do Império’.

¹⁰⁸ Featherstone, *Solidarity*.

¹⁰⁹ Sandoval, *Methodology of the Oppressed*.

¹¹⁰ Springer, ‘Anarchism! What Geography Still Ought To Be’; Ferretti, ‘Egemonia’.

¹¹¹ Mbembe et al., ‘What Is Postcolonial Thinking?’

intellectual in the Palestinian cause – but nevertheless there are distinct traditions of thought at stake. Importantly, there are also important cleavages within all these approaches which, as Brent Hayes Edwards notes of ‘cultures of black internationalism’, are “adversarial” to themselves¹¹². It is productive to hold traditions apart to identify – perhaps counter-intuitively – what they have in common, and their shared intellectual influences. This relates in particular to the distinctive ways in which anti, post-, de-colonial and subaltern thought have related to the equally internally differentiated histories of Marxist thought. This is also to suggest that antitheses between ‘Marxist’ and ‘postcolonial’ approaches in geography might seem less irreconcilable if we explore new and shared histories of these traditions¹¹³. We might find other ways of working with what Gillian Hart calls ‘an alternative spatio-historical Marxist postcolonial approach’¹¹⁴ through exploring such histories. Drawing the distinctions between traditions is to immediately break them down again: I position Castro as an anti-colonial thinker, but also as an important precursor of Latin American dependency theory, with its strong links with contemporary decolonial approaches, and history of association with Latin American anti-imperialism. Traditions, after all, are made to be broken.

Translation is a crucial theory and praxis here. As Robert Young puts it, ‘nothing comes closer to the central activity and political dynamic of postcolonialism than the concept of translation’¹¹⁵, and anti-colonialism, too, functions through and with translation. Castro’s work has been translated into dozens of languages, but very unevenly into English. This thesis both investigates histories of translation, and proceeds through translation. The question of translation as methodology and that of the relationship between translation and the project of writing de/post/anti- colonial geographies are umbilically connected. This relationship between translation and decolonization in contemporary geographical debates is an important site for reflection¹¹⁶. Translation can bring alternative traditions to light, but also puts difference at the centre of epistemology, and in so doing challenges hegemonic modes of thought. Jazeel places particular epistemological emphasis on ‘moments of untranslatability’¹¹⁷ and their capacity to re-centre the singular and the different. He argues that these moments are ‘immensely productive encounters where incommensurable differences encounter one another. [...] Singularities, I would suggest, can reveal themselves in moments of translation failure that we need to hold on to’¹¹⁸. While absolutely concurring that processes of translation are productive, that difference is not always reducible to similarity, and that different language systems can never function as mirrors, I am cautious

¹¹² Edwards, *The Practice of Diaspora*, 7.

¹¹³ eg Derickson, ‘Urban Geography I’.

¹¹⁴ Hart, ‘Relational Comparison Revisited’, 2016, 373.

¹¹⁵ Young, *Postcolonialism: A Very Short Introduction*, 140.

¹¹⁶ Jazeel, ‘Singularity’, 10.

¹¹⁷ Jazeel, 12.

¹¹⁸ Jazeel, 12.

about the concepts of translation ‘failure’ and the un-translatable, because it seems to risk proposing, logically, that there are other moments of translation’s ‘success’; of complete, wholly achieved translation. I would emphasize, rather, how all processes of translation are moments of relative failure and loss – as well as relative success, and gain. Working from the premise that there are particular ‘moments’ of untranslatability which yield singularity – a kind of Benjaminian or Joycean epiphany – suggests that the rest of the time translation is straightforward and transparent. I think attending to the constant frictiveness of all translation is just as fruitful. Even between apparently cognate ‘European’ words there can be instances of profoundly productive difference in translation.

The status of translation in geography is at best uncertain, but I consider it an essential part of my methodology. Nicholas Harrison writes that translation is a creative, interpretative, ‘exacting practice’. Translations ‘embody high levels of specialized knowledge and scholarship,’ and consequently ‘translation should be treated as a fully legitimate form of research’¹¹⁹. Geography should also consider translation in this way. As literary studies has long known, but geography can still afford to learn¹²⁰, the interstices between languages are fruitful sites for theoretical production. Italiano posits translation as negentropy – a sight of the emergence of the new¹²¹. Translation as a research method is culturally informed, linguistically attentive, creative and inherently interpretative. Focussing on translation as method is also to bring the theory and praxis of modern languages research and translation studies into geography. Mélima Gomes and Shadia Hussein de Araújo call for a ‘critical practice of translation in geography’¹²², and Federico Italiano argues that within translation studies – itself a multidisciplinary discipline – ‘the paradigm of space has been experiencing a boom’¹²³, and there has begun to be some methodological transmission in the other direction, between translation studies and geography.¹²⁴ Italiano seeks to offer a ‘synthesis of the spatial and translational turn’¹²⁵. This is clearly a broad task with many potential avenues which remain untrodden. The lack of recognition given to the role of translator and, in the case of academic work, the general lack of worldly (financial or career) incentives to undertake translation, is part of the challenge. Whilst, as Nicholas Harrison and others have noted, in the UK context translations can be submitted to the Research Excellence Framework, they also note that this is undertaken tentatively even within Modern Languages, and that translation is still treated as

¹¹⁹ Harrison, ‘Notes on Translation as Research’, 5–6.

¹²⁰ Augustin Berque’s work on Japanese philosopher Watsuji Tetsurô (1889–1960) is a relatively rare case of such an approach in geographical thought Berque, ‘Offspring’.

¹²¹ Italiano, *Translation and Geography*, 7–9.

¹²² Araújo and Gomes, ‘For a Critical Practice of Translation in Geography’.

¹²³ Italiano, *Translation and Geography*, 3.

¹²⁴ There have been concerted attempts at thinking through methods in translation studies, in particular in relation to history. See for example O’Sullivan, ‘Introduction’ However, less attention has been given to synthesising translation studies and geography.

¹²⁵ Italiano, *Translation and Geography*, 4–5.

marginal within the constraining and managerialist format of research assessment. This is part of the unfortunate situation that means that translation is not considered an important part of the collective academic project of geography. If geographical texts are translated, it's done by others, an invisible practice conducted at a remove from 'real' research.

Lawrence Venuti proposes understanding translation as 'hermeneutic [...] not as the reproduction of an unchanging textual essence but as an act of interpreting a text that is variable in form and content'¹²⁶. Venuti continues,

'if we agree that a translation transforms the source text, then evaluation cannot stop at a consideration of its relation to that text, but must explore the manifold conditions – linguistic and discursive, cultural and social – that figure into its interpretive inscription. These conditions are transindividual, situated in communities and institutions'¹²⁷.

This informs how translation is part of my research practice. For instance, Chapter Two attends to the 'transindividual' context of Castro's urban geography, notably in the contested politics of Recife and the Northeast, in attempting to translate the concept of the 'amphibious city'. This requires putting texts into a much broader historical and geographical context. Venuti proposes

'a translation ethics, where the good is the creative and the innovative. Because translation traffics in linguistic and cultural differences, it ought never to maintain the cultural and social status quo but always to challenge it and, if the conditions are advantageous, to inspire the development of new communities and institutions in the receiving situation'¹²⁸.

This ethics is also a methodology, of analysing Castro's conceptual development within its broad linguistic, discursive, cultural and social contexts. As Jazeel argues, 'it can be useful to think of ethnographic and historical work as itself an act of translation insofar as it always by necessity involves the effort to learn the poetics of another form of life [...] yet it is important to remember that translation is about the hard work of language, of textuality, of idiom [...] a most intimate act of reading, a literal act of surrendering to the text of the other'¹²⁹. Translation as a research methodology functions at many scales, from the word, to the book, to intellectual and historical context. Thinking through translation

¹²⁶ Venuti, 'Introduction', 128.

¹²⁷ Venuti, 130–31.

¹²⁸ Venuti, 131.

¹²⁹ Jazeel, 'Singularity', 10.

highlights which and how geographical concepts are brought into the world in different spaces and times¹³⁰.

The approach I take to the debate over ‘decolonizing’ geography is twofold. Firstly it is to emphasize the importance of getting on with the work of investigating alternative intellectual histories, including through conducting translations and analysing geographical work both in translation and in languages other than English. The second position is to emphasize the importance of translation as theoretical praxis. Whilst I share Mélina Gomes and Shadia Husseini de Araújo’s caution about the possibility for translation to entrench hegemony, it seems nevertheless a critical path to follow which ‘can [...] help to highlight, destabilize and perhaps in some way dismantle the asymmetrical power dynamics produced by hegemonic languages in international academia’¹³¹. This emphasis on the necessity of translation is also to suggest that perhaps Maria-Dolores Garcia-Ramon was right when, in 2003, she argued that ‘we should ban monolingualism in geography’¹³². Her polemical appeal is outrageous, I suspect, only to anglophone geographers. At the least, multilingualism and translation should be seen as political imperatives for critical scholarship. I hope this thesis makes the case not only for the value of Castro’s work in thinking about the history of geographical ideas, but for the centrality of translation to building in fact the more transnational, multilingual, polyphonic discipline which so many espouse in principle.

The history of geography – and more specifically political ecology – has played out through connections and translations across languages. Thinking biographically demonstrates this: Castro’s reading was multilingual, drawing on North American nutritional science, Chinese political theory, French geography and Spanish philosophy. His intellectual friendships took place in at least four languages, and the spaces of knowledge production themselves are marked by multilingualism, whether in international institutions (Chapter Five), research groups (Chapter Six) or conferences. Archival work for this thesis plays this multilingualism out, Castro worked in Portuguese, French, Spanish and English, and his work has been translated into dozens of other languages (see Chapter Three).

As Minca puts it,

‘a significant part of English-language geography’ has a ‘seemingly insurmountable incapacity [...] not necessarily of *transcending* its boundaries but, at least, of fully *recognising* these boundaries. It is, again, a question of cultural politics: a question of

¹³⁰ See for instance Rupke, ‘Translation Studies in the History of Science’; Ferretti, ‘Political Geographies’.

¹³¹ Araújo and Germes, ‘For a Critical Practice of Translation in Geography’, 5.

¹³² Garcia-Ramon, ‘Globalization and International Geography’, 3.

recognising some of the undeclared choices that lie at the heart of the relationship between power and (academic) knowledge'¹³³.

A glance through the reference list of most critical geographical writing in English finds a continuing Anglo-American intellectual and linguistic hegemony. In spite of the involvement of many influential geographers in these debates a decade and a half ago there appears little change, and the role of English in progressive cultural imperialism, and the neoliberalization of universities¹³⁴. While there are efforts to 'mainstream' decolonization, linguistic hegemony itself appears unfractured. Minca and Fall wrote in 2012 that they 'feel this debate is now going in circles'¹³⁵.

Such a debate over language and decolonization requires thinking through not only the internal power dynamics of the discipline – in particular questions of race¹³⁶ – but also critical geography's relationship with academic institutions and neoliberalization¹³⁷. As Leff has it, in relation to political ecology in particular, 'the construction of political ecology as a disciplinary field [...] requires thinking critically about the supremacy of the anglophone school [...] over and above the interpretations that emerge in other geographical latitudes and in other economic, social and cultural contexts'¹³⁸. Translation plays an ambivalent role here. It could be argued that merely translating texts into English does not alter the fundamental dynamics of the power of one language over another. However, Claudio Minca's point here is an important one, when he observes that when English is used as a common language without anglophone speakers present it's not a problem¹³⁹. There is a role therefore for translating work into English less as a way of making it available to monolingual anglophones, but to make it available in a language which – for better or worse – remains a common tongue available to many. Projects of translation are, of course, ongoing, such as Lucas Melgaço and others' work on Milton Santos, *Antipode's* translation funding and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Hosam Aboul-Ela's *Theory in the World* book series. Conferences such as the International Conference of Critical Geography continue to encourage multilingualism, and geographers continue to put forward manifestos for more critical practices of translation in the discipline¹⁴⁰. Institutional support for language learning is an important step (this thesis has been in part enabled precisely by an additional ESRC grant for language

¹³³ Claudio Minca in Hubbard, Kitchin, and Valentine, 'Editors' Reply to Book Review Forum', 168.

¹³⁴ Minca et al., 'Guest Editorials', 164–66.

¹³⁵ Fall and Minca, 'Not a Geography of What Doesn't Exist', 545.

¹³⁶ Esson et al., 'The 2017 RGS-IBG Chair's Theme'.

¹³⁷ See for example Resista, 'Is Decolonizing the New Black?'

¹³⁸ Leff, 'Power-Knowledge Relations in the Field of Political Ecology'.

¹³⁹ Minca et al., 'Guest Editorials', 165.

¹⁴⁰ Araújo and Germes, 'For a Critical Practice of Translation in Geography', 6.

acquisition), and Sharad Chari calls for recovering from Area Studies its institutional focus on language acquisition¹⁴¹.

‘The relative hegemony of anglophone Geography’¹⁴² shifts according to perspective. While Northeastern thought is often characterized as having a subaltern position even in Brazil, its geographical tradition is not cowed by a hegemonic anglophone geography. On the contrary, it draws on elements from that geography, while also having access to a wide range of other theoretical and empirical work, particularly in Portuguese and French, as well as other autochthonous knowledges¹⁴³. Even postcolonial critiques of anglophone geography’s disciplinary construction can fall into the fallacy of its own centrality. Belina, Best and Naumann argue, for instance that in the German context ‘power structures within the (nationally organized) discipline are far more significant for the concrete situation of critical geography in any particular country than the international relations within critical geography’¹⁴⁴. This is echoed too in Claudio Minca and Juliet Fall’s work on Giuseppe Dematteis who, they note, was ‘more preoccupied with the possibility of transforming Italian geography than with linking his work [to debates on postmodernism in English-language geography]’¹⁴⁵. This resonates with Castro’s own geographical biography: the institutionalization of geography in Brazil, of which he was an important part, was as much a question of national intellectual and political affairs than a reflection of global flows of disciplinary energy¹⁴⁶. And in the Brazilian case, French geography was the key referent. Certainly there are unequal power relations between the languages of academic work, and certainly the role of English is to be debated and challenged. However other traditions of work do not exist in a state of passive compromise. Academics and practitioners from other languages who can overwhelmingly also speak and read English (and very often third and fourth languages) have access to a wider and more eclectic range of theorizing, not only within the language-disciplines of their national or regional contexts, but also to flows of theory-making that pertain both in the international sphere and (somewhat distinctly) in English speaking countries. As Minca argues, ‘although the English-language journals may certainly provide a formidable instrument of internal regulation and legitimation for the Anglo-American geographical community, they are not a propitious terrain for encounter and debate among diverse geographical traditions’¹⁴⁷. This thesis attempts to configure terrain for such encounter.

¹⁴¹ Chari, ‘Trans-Area Studies and the Perils of Geographical “World-Writing”’.

¹⁴² Jazeel, ‘Between Area and Discipline’, 659.

¹⁴³ Ferretti, ‘Decolonizing the Northeast: Brazilian Subalterns, Non-European Heritages, and Radical Geography in Pernambuco’.

¹⁴⁴ Belina, Best, and Naumann, ‘Critical Geography in Germany’, 47.

¹⁴⁵ Fall and Minca, ‘Not a Geography of What Doesn’t Exist’, 553–54.

¹⁴⁶ See Andrade, ‘A Geografia No Contexto’.

¹⁴⁷ Minca, ‘Venetian Geographical Praxis’, 288.

The majority of anglophone academia is conducted in one language, with non-anglophone texts made available in English in uneven and untimely ways. (We could point to the upsurge of work on Lefebvre or Gramsci in English while significant portions of their work remain un-translated and unedited.) Meanwhile non-anglophone traditions are often multilingual. It is perhaps the flaw uniquely of anglophone scholarship to be largely monolingual. This is not to overlook the fact that multilingualism raises serious stresses on individual researchers and creates tensions of its own¹⁴⁸. More particularly, this thesis picks up on the lack of attention to geographers from Latin America and the global south in the history of geography. Blanca Ramírez argued, for instance, that in a Mexican context, ‘Anglo-American hegemony offers a starting point for theoretical and political perspectives, because Mexican geography is producing no such perspectives of its own’¹⁴⁹. This is counter-intuitive, given the dynamic outputs of Latin American critical geography. A more recent intervention by Sofía Zaragocin Carvajal, Melissa Moreano Venegas and Soledad Álvarez Velasco has made the counter-claim that – notwithstanding hesitation to bound Latin America as an intellectual space or denying the influence of Anglo-American ideas – Latin American critical thought can and has already contributed to a critical, revisionist and interdisciplinary analysis of the production of space and global inequality¹⁵⁰. Sam Halvorsen’s work is pushing in similar directions¹⁵¹, and I hope this thesis provides additional historical grist for this claim, and makes the case for a long history of Latin American contribution to the ideas of political ecology. There are of course very many strands of geographical work in Latin America, and political ecology is not perhaps one of the most prominent. As Enrique Leff and Astrid Ulloa, among others¹⁵² have argued, indigenous thought, and the epistemological claims of Latin American peoples and political movements, have a crucially important role in re-framing the power-knowledge relations of contemporary political ecology. This thesis seeks to emphasize the long histories of mutual interaction between Southern and Northern thought, and between different language disciplines.

Conclusion

The thesis, therefore, proceeds as follows:

The body of the thesis is then made up of six chapters, which proceed roughly chronologically through Castro’s life, but are organized by thematic concerns. In **Chapter One** (1928-46), I explore the emergence of Castro’s geography of hunger, paying particular attention to his transition from nutritional

¹⁴⁸ Minca, ‘Venetian Geographical Praxis’.

¹⁴⁹ Ramírez, ‘The Non Spaces of Critical Geography in Mexico’, 546.

¹⁵⁰ Zaragocin-Carvajal, Moreano-Venegas, and Álvarez-Velasco, ‘Towards a Re-Appropriation of Critical Geography for Latin America. Introduction to Dossier’.

¹⁵¹ See Halvorsen, ‘Cartographies of Epistemic Expropriation’.

¹⁵² Ulloa, ‘Environment and Development: Reflections from Latin America’.

science to geography. In **Chapter Two** (1928-54), I turn to Castro's urban geography, placing his concept of the amphibious city in the historical geography of Recife, and urban transformations among the mangroves of that city. I suggest that amphibiousness can be added to the conceptual toolkit of Black Atlantic urban geographies. In **Chapter Three** (1946-55) I change emphasis, to look at the central texts of Castro's intellectual output: the 1946 *Geografia da Fome* [Geography of Hunger] and the 1951 *Geopolítica da Fome* [Geopolitics of Hunger]. I follow the publishing and translation histories of these books to argue for increased attention to the material and intellectual dynamics of translation in the history of geographical thought. In **Chapter Four** (1955-64), I return to the Northeast of Brazil, and the question of the region. Castro's work was always and persistently interested in the problematic of the region, which was key to his emerging thought on underdevelopment – a word he often claimed to have coined. I use Castro's work as an impetus to consider how theorists of dependency and underdevelopment from the Northeast can contribute to conceptions of the region. In **Chapter Five** (1958-68), I follow Castro's path as a public intellectual from the region, to the international, and into exile, seeking to understand what his biography can tell us about the question of the responsibilities of the geographical intellectual and radical geography. In **Chapter Six** (1968-73), finally, I focus on Castro's work at the University of Vincennes in Paris, and his roles in emerging schools of political ecology and radical geography, and in the politics of international environmentalism.

I begin, then, by turning to Castro's most lasting, and most difficult, idea: the geography of hunger.

Chapter One: The geography of hunger as radical, metabolic humanism

A alma da fome é política
[the soul of hunger is politics]

Herbert de Souza, aka Betinho¹

Introduction

In this first chapter, through intellectual biography, and by drawing on Castro's texts and archives, I analyse both the *geography* and the *hunger* of Castro's most important analytical intervention: the geography of hunger. This is 'a tragically strange geography which, instead of describing the earth feeding man, presents man serving simply to feed the earth'². Through this strange, negative, metabolic geography, Castro's militant humanism³ and his geography of hunger are resolutely intertwined. Understood in this way, Castro's geography of hunger comes into view as a disruptive theory that 'has to be grasped in the place and time out of which it emerges as a part of that time and then subsequently related to the places where it might be put to use'⁴. Castro's demand for a world without hunger was a demand for a whole new social, ecological and economic system, because he understood hunger not merely as a consequence of socio-economic forms, but as a necessary precondition of their propagation. Overcoming hunger would require a new space in which humanism could flourish, against the dehumanizing forces of exploitation. We should take Castro's radical humanism seriously not least – to follow Richard Pithouse on Frantz Fanon – because Castro himself did⁵.

In this chapter I emphasize the methodological transition in Castro's thought and praxis from a political and scientific focus on nutrition to the geographical intervention of his most famous work, *A Geografia da Fome*. Before moving on to its particular humanist stakes, it is important to place Castro as a geographer in his own moment. As I will outline in later chapters, Castro stretched, pulled and surpassed the regional geography he inherited. He placed food and hunger at the centre of a politically engaged

¹ Souza, 'A alma da fome', 1.

² Castro, *Geography of Hunger*, 32.

³ Clodomir, 'Josué de Castro: Brasileiro e Cidadão Do Mundo [Josué de Castro: Brazilian and Citizen of the World]'.

⁴ Morton, 'Traveling with Gramsci: The Spatiality of Passive Revolution', 60.

⁵ Pithouse, "'That the Tool'", 109.

re-working of the relationship between people and nature. Food is a ‘tenacious force’, he wrote⁶: ‘it is perhaps through the nutritional link that the environment – soil and climate – even though indirectly, exerts its most decisive influence on the physical vigour, productive capacity and resistance to disease of human groups’⁷. The socioeconomic structure of society is crystallized and reproduced in the body. Hunger is ‘biological slavery’; ‘the formative pressures of economic and cultural forces make themselves felt [...] through the biological mechanism: it is through the nutritional deficit that monoculture imposes itself’⁸. All of this moves the body more to the centre of thinking about space and nature than elsewhere in the geography of the mid-20th century, and anticipates more recent configurations of the role of the corporeal in political ecology.

Although never fully formulated or theorised, he deployed a conception of space in both his *geography* and *geopolitics* of hunger which went past the boundaries of a regional analysis, although was more limited than the relational conception of space which was to become prevalent in geographical thinking in the late twentieth century. He was a precursor of the transition to the ‘new geography’ that Milton Santos laid out in the 1970s⁹. This involved, as I will outline in Chapter Four, a sublation of the notion of the region, which, while maintaining an epistemological focus on the specificities of local ecologies, societies and economies, nevertheless saw the region as produced in relation to global geo-historical processes. Castro’s *geography* of hunger, therefore, sits across an important juncture in the history of the discipline.

Moving beyond its significance to the history of geography, the lasting value of Castro’s geography of hunger is found in its metabolic critique of society, space and nature. It is here, above all, that we can locate Castro’s metabolic contribution to geography and to contemporary political ecology. His disciplinary shift from nutrition to geography put the dietary metabolic into direct articulation with nature, as well as with spatial, socioeconomic, and political processes¹⁰. As a scientist, Castro investigated how the tropical climate influenced basal metabolism. However, he moved beyond the somatic scale. Sociospatial processes, and the history of colonialism, he argued, produce hunger. It was from and through an attention to the precise metabolic conditions of starvation, malnutrition and endemic hunger that he articulated his sociopolitical critique of the uneven relations between nature and society. This is a productively different trajectory for metabolic analysis to that of Marxist-oriented political ecology founded on Marx and Engels’ idea of socioecological metabolism. As I have argued

⁶ Castro, *Alimentação e Raça*.

⁷ Castro, *Geopolítica da Fome: Ensaio sobre os Problemas de Alimentação e de População do Mundo*, 1:5.

⁸ Castro, *Geografia Da Fome*, 31.

⁹ Santos, *Por Uma Geografia Nova*.

¹⁰ Magalhães, *Fome: uma (re)leitura de Josué de Castro* [*Hunger: a (re)reading of Josué de Castro*]; Alves, ‘A Contribuição de Josué de Castro’.

more extensively elsewhere¹¹, an alternative Latin American intellectual history for metabolic critique, routed through Castro's work, emphasizes the imperial histories embedded in political ecology's conceptual frameworks. That is to say, just as European and Latin American bodies are produced in relation to one another, the intellectual and material histories of metabolism cannot be separated. The geography of hunger that Castro articulates is based on these differential, but deeply related, bodies. In his later career Castro came to see the metabolic malnutrition of the Brazilian masses – both urban and rural – as the material manifestation of underdevelopment.

Analysing Castro's work, then, provides a new set of intersections between the history of geography, political ecology and underdevelopment thinking. Clearly, Castro is not the only scholar to have connected nutrition and geography, but thinking with Castro can shed light on the problem of how the human body is unequally produced in uneven environments. Recently, sub-disciplines such as Urban Political Ecology and the Political Ecology of the body have explored how socio-environmental processes materialize in bodies. This recalls another of Castro's key and lasting insights: hunger is a question not only of calorific flows but of vitamins, minerals, protein, culture, identity, and sociality. The type of food eaten, who produced it, how, and where all leave traces in the body. Deploying a concept of metabolism emerging from histories of nutritional thought can add to approaches that embed the body in the production of uneven geographical environments. Such an alternative intellectual history of metabolism suggests on the one hand that Rioux is right that 'the uneven body is the hallmark of the *human* geography of capitalism'¹², but, further, that this concept must include the bodies implicated in the production of food, as well as in its consumption.

Re-reading the geography of hunger today can emphasize precisely this coextensiveness of ecosocial and physiological metabolism. This is to put the coproduction of social and environmental injustice, of bodies, nature, and society in the foreground of geographical analysis. Uneven nature is immanent to bodily, social, and political life and the body's sensory qualities can be at the root of an ecological politics of praxis and everyday life¹³. Nik Heynen, for instance, has connected hunger, the metabolic body and political radicalism in his work on the Black Panther Breakfast club¹⁴. Adding Castro's legacy to such productive approaches to the geography of hunger opens new historical paradigms for Anglophone scholars of radical ecological thinking and praxis. For Castro, nutrition is always already political and the body is a process in which other processes congeal and reform. As metabolism determines the spatial, temporal, and ecological dynamics of survival¹⁵, a physiological approach to metabolism calls attention to the body's social reproduction, its openness and relationality. The

¹¹ Davies, 'Unwrapping the Oxo Cube: Josué de Castro and the Intellectual History of Metabolism'.

¹² Rioux, 'Capitalism and the Production of Uneven Bodies'.

¹³ See eg Loftus, *Everyday Environmentalism*, x.

¹⁴ eg Heynen, 'Bending the Bars of Empire'.

¹⁵ Bunge, 'The Geography of Human Survival'; Heynen, "'But It's Alright, Ma, It's Life, and Life Only'".

ontological and epistemological space of metabolic circulation passes through the human body, so that is where geographical investigations should follow. These are the spatial politics that Josué de Castro inspires us to delineate.

Castro studied hunger as a dehumanizing force which emerged from the historical geographies of colonialism and neo-colonialism. The struggle against hunger was therefore irreducibly a struggle against colonialism, imperialism and fascism. He understood the starving as having been stripped of their humanity. Nevertheless, for all that Castro saw in global hunger the persistent failures of Western civilization, he wanted to revive, not abandon, humanism. This meant new conceptions of the human and society were needed¹⁶. As such, his work can be understood in dialogue with a tradition of reconstructing and reclaiming humanism advanced by many important anti-colonial thinkers, notably Aimé Césaire, Frantz Fanon and Sylvia Wynter¹⁷. Castro's humanism opposes 'economic man', attempting 'to be a scientific account of the biological tragedy in which innumerable human groups died, and continue to die, of hunger, while this scabrous era of economic man draws to a close'¹⁸. In 1960, he wrote 'we aim, with [...] [the geography of hunger], to make an infinitesimal contribution to the elaboration of a plan for the resurgence of our civilization, through appreciating anew the physiology of man'¹⁹. Castro brings a geographical, ecological and physiological dimension to the central humanist problematic of anti-colonial thought and praxis: to expand the subject of humanism into a new, truly universal category, on new grounds²⁰. It is important to position Castro's radical humanism in the historical context of claims to universal humanism at the time. These emerged from many different fields in what Glenda Sluga calls 'that curiously utopian moment bracketed by the end of World War II and the onset of the cold war'²¹. Castro's position beyond Cold War binaries can be read in his 1946 argument that 'an interest in man and in the re-humanization of culture is the common denominator of both the great economic systems'²² of capitalism and communism, and that in the post-war world there was 'a concentrated interest in biological man as a concrete entity'²³. The concrete entity of the nutritional subject of his previous research lies behind his humanism's dual tenor as is deeply practical and politically utopian. Anti-colonial and liberation thinkers were developing new claims and forms of humanism. Fanon's revolutionary declarations – what Nick Nesbitt calls his 'revolutionary

¹⁶ Castro, *A Estratégia Do Desenvolvimento*, 11.

¹⁷ Scott, 'The Re-Enchantment of Humanism', 119–21.

¹⁸ Castro, *Geografia da Fome: O Dilema Brasileiro: Pão ou Aço*, 25.

¹⁹ Castro, 23.

²⁰ Pithouse, "'That the Tool'", 110–11.

²¹ Sluga, 'UNESCO and the (One) World of Julian Huxley', 393.

²² Castro, *Geography of Hunger*, 19.

²³ Castro, 18.

inhumanism'²⁴ – are a key part of this history, but debate over the status of the human as the universal subject was longstanding. We can place Castro in a tradition of radical or revolutionary humanisms, which are 'context specific, and require [...] active struggle'²⁵.

In 1974 David Harvey wrote that

'although there is more of which to be ashamed than proud in the geographic tradition, there is a thread to geographic thinking which, at its best, produces an acute sensitivity to place and community, to the symbiotic relations between individuals, communities and environments. This sensitivity to locale and interaction produces a kind of parochial humanism – a humanism, that is, in certain senses deep and penetrating, but which is locked into the absolute spaces generated by the regional concept'²⁶.

I argue throughout this thesis that Castro's humanism, and its part in his geography, is 'deep and penetrating' but in a different kind of way, not least because Castro's 'regional concept' is forged in a different flame to the imperialist history of geography Harvey has in mind. It breaks beyond a notion of 'absolute space' in particular by beginning its geographical inquiry from the hungry body. Its humanism is indeed parochial in another sense: not small-minded, but situated, metabolic, and from the margins.

I interpret Castro's trajectory of thought as he moved from the study of the hungry body in Recife to an anti-colonial geography of hunger. I will argue that, in particular, he made two interventions of lasting importance. The first was precisely in the methodological movement from nutritional and metabolic science to geographical method: from the internal workings of the body to the production of space and nature. Empirical natural scientific experiments, social scientific surveys, and clinical medical practice grounded Castro's geographical method, and his '*biosociologia*' [bio-sociology]. As a natural and social scientist, he performed research in laboratories, in urban field sites and in doctors' surgeries. As such, Castro's interdisciplinarity is a central concern for me here, not least because of the long history of the interconnection between European and North American natural scientific research and enlightenment humanism²⁷. The second was to transform the positivist knowledge of regional geography²⁸ into a negativist knowledge of lack. He capsized his adoptive vessel of regional geography: from analysis and description of geographical forms as they appear on the surface of the earth – what he called the achievements of society – to an analysis of negation and lack. He produces a geography

²⁴ Nesbitt, 'Revolutionary Inhumanism'.

²⁵ Patel, 'Global Fascism Revolutionary Humanism and the Ethics of Food Sovereignty', 81.

²⁶ Harvey, *Spaces of Capital*, 2001, 34.

²⁷ Wynter, 'Unsettling', 268–70.

²⁸ Cosgrove, 'Towards a Radical Cultural Geography', 2–3.

of hunger, not a geography of food. He did not exhaust the possibilities of these two intellectual movements, and his work does not manifest as a fully formulated set of theoretical propositions. Not only did Castro's ideas change, but they were in many senses limited and underdeveloped: his conception of race initially lacked a sociology²⁹; his silence on gender is deafening; his analysis of capitalism and class is limited; and his account of the feudal remnants of Northeastern plantation society is contested. But there is much in both his theory and praxis that remains compelling for scholars investigating how the body is produced through, and in relation to, the uneven production of nature and space. By following both his theory and his praxis we can see how an ecological, relational, humanist geography of hunger can offer novel formulations for contemporary geography.

A. 1930s: From *Antropofagia* to Nutrition

In the autumn of 1930, political life in Brazil burst into crisis with a military coup led by Getúlio Vargas. Vargas, from the state of Rio Grande do Sul, had been the liberal opposition candidate, running against Júlio Prestes, a conservative who would have continued the Old Republic and its long-standing politics of *café com leite* in which the coffee elites of São Paulo allied with the dairy interests of Minas Gerais. In 1930 Vargas put an end to this Old Republic and began a long period at the pinnacle of Brazilian state power. Under Vargas the state began to centralize, and some of the old élites were challenged. Corporatist, workerist politics gained an – albeit often untrustworthy – voice in the centre of state politics, and various movements for national development clicked into gear. Yet Vargas moved with the winds of politics as much as he commanded them, swaying from liberal to populist to autocrat and back again during his initial fifteen years as President, and then again from 1951 until his suicide in 1954.

The first decades of Castro's own political career was intimately tied to Vargas'. In Pernambuco, the revolution of 1930 had seen significant political tumult, not least because the politician João Pessoa, who was Vargas' candidate for the vice-Presidency in the 1930 elections, was assassinated in the *A Glória* sweet shop in Rua Nova, in the centre of Recife. Pessoa's murder was one of the triggers of Vargas' coup. The first five years of the new republic was marked by instability, and in 1935 there was a short-lived communist uprising, one of whose centres was Recife. Following this, amid Vargas' increasingly authoritarian rule and the installation of the *Estado Novo* (New State), Recife was the centre of a quasi-fascist government, until the installation of the Second Brazilian Republic in 1946. Throughout this period, though, Recife was also a regional centre not only of left-wing politics, but of Brazilian cultural and intellectual life.

²⁹ Though it is worth noting that by 1958 he had a more sophisticated conception of race, writing that 'race is an anthropological abstraction without real existence' Castro, *The Compass of China*. See also Castro, *Ensaio de biologia social*, 131–52.

It was in this political milieu that Josué de Castro came of age as an intellectual. During the late 1920s and early 1930s Castro moved between Recife and Rio de Janeiro, studying, writing and working in both, as well as travelling to Mexico, the United States and Argentina. He was a passionate follower of cinema, an aspiring poet, writer³⁰ and social commentator³¹. As Normando Melo has shown, in early adulthood, hunger was not his primary concern³². He knew Oswald de Andrade and Mário de Andrade, the leading modernists who changed the face of Brazilian culture. Castro published an underwhelming romantic poem in the famous *Revista de Antropofagia*³³ [The Magazine of Anthropophagy], the outlet for the anthropophagic movement, which saw the destiny of Brazilian modernism to be in cannibalizing European culture and confronting the epistemological challenge of being (European) in the Americas³⁴. Prior to the 1930 revolution Castro had expected a government post in education³⁵, but the revolution altered his fortunes and instead he established a medical practice in his hometown. In a series of twists of fate he became a specialist in nutrition³⁶. Nutritional knowledge was undeveloped in Recife: Castro later said that there was only one relevant book on nutrition in the medical faculty library, an obscure German handbook on internal medicine by Falle Ueber³⁷. Castro was employed as a factory doctor in 1930, and it was at this time that his interest in hunger solidified. Although they presented themselves with various kinds of illness, Castro realized that his worker-patients were chronically malnourished. With this insight a swathe of work began, which was to culminate with the 1946 *Geografia da Fome*.



Figure 2: Josué de Castro. Arquivo Fotográfico, Fundação Joaquim Nabuco. Source: elfikurten.com.br

³⁰ See for example Castro, 'A Poesia de Manoel de Abreu'; Castro, 'Introdução'.

³¹ See for instance Castro, 'Assistencia Social [Social Welfare]'.

³² Melo, 'Josué de Castro Antes Da Fome', 140–42.

³³ Castro, 'Namôro'.

³⁴ Melo, 'Josué de Castro Antes Da Fome', 141.

³⁵ Fernandes and Gonçalves, *Josué de Castro*, 28–29.

³⁶ Melo and Neves, *Josué de Castro*, 52.

³⁷ Melo and Neves, 52.

In 1932 he conducted the first nutritional survey ever undertaken in Brazil³⁸, published as *As Condições da vida das classes operárias no Recife* [The Conditions of Life of the Working Classes in Recife] in 1935. The book's Engelsian title is not accidental, and tells us a lot about Castro's critical attitude to prevailing social structures, but it does not indicate he was a Marxist. His early work was to prove a constant touchstone for his studies on hunger: 'it was not at the Sorbonne, or at any other seat of learning, that I came to know the anatomy of hunger, but rather in the marshy land of the poor parts of Recife'³⁹. His early scientific knowledge of nutrition came from primary urban sociological fieldwork. Most of the workers and unemployed whom the survey covered lived in informal settlements ('mocambos') in the interstices of the mangrove-lined, deltaic, muddy, infrastructural landscape of the plantation town⁴⁰ of Recife. Castro saw that hunger had immediate effects and was a proximate cause and exacerbating effect in the spread of infectious diseases⁴¹. He described this urban socio-ecological landscape of Recife as 'the cycle of the crab': people lived in metabolic relation to their urban environment, catching crabs for subsistence, while the crabs lived off human detritus (see Figure 2). This diet left people malnourished and hybrid – imbued with their environment through their metabolic relation to it: 'humans fashioned of crab meat [...] foster brothers to the crab'⁴². Chico Science and *mangue beat* picked up the figure of the *homem-caranguejo* as an encryption for a resistive, place-bound cultural identity – a kind of topick god, in Haraway's terms (Figure 3)⁴³. *Mangue beat* adopted the crab with a full-throated subaltern irony that consciously recalled Castro's situated humanist politics that this chapter will explore. Castro never lost sight of the cycle of the crab. This particular, regional, metabolic relationship remained the cornerstone of his thought. In the crab cycle human relations with



nature are direct and metabolic, familial and corporeal.

Condições initiated an interdisciplinary analysis of the biological and social life of Recife's working class; an approach Castro termed *biosociologia*. This was a thick kind of interdisciplinarity of the sort often lauded, but perhaps less practiced, by geographers⁴⁴: Castro was practising as a social

Figure 3: Chico Science. Source: Youtube. Chico Science -- Espacial MTV Brasil.

nomica (1930-1976)', 23–25.

³⁹ Castro, *Of Men and Crabs*, ix.

⁴⁰ I use this term drawing on McKittrick, 'Plantation Futures', 8–12. However, I attach slightly different meanings to it, discussed in Chapter Two.

⁴¹ Magalhães, *Fome: uma (re)leitura de Josué de Castro* [Hunger: a (re)reading of Josué de Castro], 29–35.

⁴² Castro, *Of Men and Crabs*, xii.

⁴³ Haraway, 'Otherworldly Conversations; Terran Topics; Local Terms', 67.

⁴⁴ Castree, Demeritt, and Liverman, 'Introduction: Making Sense of Environmental Geography'.

scientist, a natural scientist and a medical doctor in this period. It was as a factory doctor that he began his investigations into hunger. Indeed, we have an intriguing image of Castro at this time in his thinly-disguised autobiographical fictionalization of the story ‘Assistência Social,’ written in the mid 1930s. The short story follows a young, liberal doctor working in Recife in a factory, commuting through sun and rain and confronting a hypocritical factory boss who refuse to pay for the most basic services for their staff⁴⁵. When Castro wrote *Condições*, then, he calculated the cost of living – a healthy and adequate diet, but also clean water, rent and electricity (the metabolic necessities of life) – and juxtaposed it with actual wages and available diet. He finds food fundamentally lacking not only in quantity but also in vitamins, minerals and nutrients: ‘there is only one way of feeding yourself worse than this: not to eat at all’⁴⁶. In *Condições* Castro began to develop a metabolic critique of everyday life. However, the book does not address the social reproduction of life, or the division of labour of food provision. Nor did that book offer what Castro would later produce: a geographical understanding of hunger. Castro started to promote his ideas on public nutrition across Brazil – specifically in Rio, São Paulo and Recife⁴⁷. As his status grew, Castro sought to embed nutritional study in academic institutions and to bring nutritional science into public policy⁴⁸. He was involved in establishing the Faculty of Philosophy and Social Sciences, teaching not only Human Geography but also courses in Social Biology⁴⁹. *Condições* also marked Castro’s entry point into public policy, in particular about the minimum wage. He became involved in various public health initiatives in Recife, including against alcohol as well as about diet⁵⁰.

Working in nutritional labs, libraries, union meetings and protest marches, Castro was the embodiment of connections between political movements and medical scientific controversies over nutritional science. It was in the middle of the 1930s, and thanks to his work on the connections between labour, public health and nutrition that Castro started to become an important figure on the Brazilian left. In the context of President Vargas’ corporatist policies, he made the important connection between the labour and peasant movements campaigning for agrarian reform, nutritional intervention and a minimum wage, both in public discourse and through legislative efforts⁵¹. Castro challenged what was known about hunger, by whom, from what sources, and in what forms. For instance, of Afro-Brazilian food

⁴⁵ Castro, Documentário Do Nordeste, 41–44.

⁴⁶ Castro, As condições de vida da classe operária no Recife, 22.

⁴⁷ Anonymous, ‘A Nota Literária’.

⁴⁸ Magalhães, *Fome: uma (re)leitura de Josué de Castro [Hunger: a (re)reading of Josué de Castro]*, 26–30; See also Andrade, ‘Josué de Castro’; Machado, ‘A Implantação Da Geografia Universitária No Rio de Janeiro’.

⁴⁹ Castro, ‘Educação’.

⁵⁰ Castro, ‘A Semana Anti-Alcoolica’.

⁵¹ See for example ‘Projeto de lei elaborado pelo deputado federal Josué de Castro’ in Magno, Tânia Elias, *Memória Do Saber*; Castro, ‘Combate Ao Latifúndio e Reforma Agrária Para Acabar Com a Fome No Brasil [Combating the Latifundia and Agrarian Reform to End Hunger in Brazil]’.

cultures, he wrote: ‘when we speak of the national politics of food [...] it is a grave embarrassment to that policy that so little is known of the origins of our humblest classes’⁵². As activist scholars such as Vandana Shiva and Carlos Walter Porto-Gonçalves continue to insist, the politics of food and agriculture is also necessarily a politics of knowledge⁵³. Nutritional science itself was deeply political. Castro was at the centre of a heated public with Gilberto Freyre and, to a lesser extent, Nelson Chaves⁵⁴. Gilberto Freyre and Castro were both from Recife, but the former’s infamously rose-tinted view of racial relations in his epic *Casa Grande e Senzala* paints a very different picture of the Northeast, and Brazil, to Castro’s work. These differences were methodological and geographical. Castro built his analysis on detailed surveys and demographic and medical methodologies. Freyre’s style was more arm’s length, touring principally rural areas by car⁵⁵. Freyre argued that in colonial Brazilian society most people were well fed -- including slaves. Castro had a much more critical view of the relationship between race and nutrition; his analysis makes clear that the harmonious society Freyre appeals to does not and did not exist. At stake was not only social history but the constitution the body politic – who they were and what they ate. Freyre publicly criticized Castro’s doctoral thesis on nutrition in the 1930s, attacking him for attempting to go beyond his remit as a nutritionist and a doctor into the realms of social science. Castro responded that Freyre did not have the necessary scientific understanding to critique his analysis⁵⁶.

The exchange generated more heat than light, but two important conclusions emerge from it. The first is that, as Silva notes, there is ‘no doubt’ that ‘it was Josué de Castro who since 1932 initiated this debate [about hunger] in a serious fashion in Brazil. With his socio-geographic method and approach dealing not only with physiological, but with cultural and economic questions’⁵⁷. The second is that it demonstrates the centrality of food and hunger to the national question in the 1930s⁵⁸. Freyre responded aggressively to Castro precisely because Brazilian national identity was at stake. Meanwhile in *Alimentação e Raça* (1935) Castro lacerated the racism of those arguing that laziness, eating habits and physical inferiority were responsible for the poverty of Afro-Brazilians. In both the Brazilian and British cases, food and nutrition were inextricably questions not only of science and knowledge, but of economics and culture. In part, these debates about food were freighted precisely because they coalesced around the Northeast. This region has often been characterized by Brazilians as the most Brazilian – and originary – place in Brazil. This has always had a bitterly ironic dimension, in the sense

⁵² Castro, *Documentário Do Nordeste*, 124.

⁵³ eg Gonçalves, ‘Geografia Da Riqueza, Fome e Meio Ambiente’.

⁵⁴ Vasconcelos, ‘The Nutritionist in Brazil’.

⁵⁵ Pallares-Burke, *Gilberto Freyre*.

⁵⁶ Melo, ‘Josué de Castro Antes Da Fome’; Amorim, ‘Em Tempos’, 67–68.

⁵⁷ Silva, ‘Gilberto Freyre e Josué de Castro’, 9.

⁵⁸ Diacon, *Stringing Together*; Silva and Nunes, ‘Josué de Castro e o Pensamento Social Brasileiro’.

that the region is both the epicentre and the periphery of Brazilianness. Freyre was one of the key figures in this regional history. Albuquerque Junior, in his seminal ‘Weaving tradition: the invention of the Brazilian Northeast,’ wrote that for ‘Freyre, the birth of the region came before that of the nation’⁵⁹. I will return to the region in Chapter Four. What is key here is to recognize that from early in his career Castro was committed both politically and intellectually to the question of the region, and willing to go toe to toe with Gilberto Freyre over how the Northeast was to be understood.

In 1934 Castro further developed his theoretical lens with his first major work, *O Problema da Alimentação no Brasil*. The book was prefaced by the Argentine nutritionist Pedro Escudero. Escudero, the major figure of nutritional science in Latin America at the time, was an important mentor for Castro⁶⁰: in 1928 he had established the *Instituto Nacional de la Nutrición* in Buenos Aires with a radical mission statement connecting metabolic life to political life:

The basis of the conservation of life [...] is nutrition: life, vigour, reproduction, spirit, society and morality depend on nutrition. Therefore, this Institute understands by ‘Nutrition’ not only the study of the life of man as a physical and moral entity but the study of the society which constitutes man. The National Institute of Nutrition is not only a hospital (though we treat the sick), nor is it only a biological laboratory (though we study life), nor is it a centre of social studies (though we investigate society), nor an agency of social action (though we help the needy), nor a school (though we teach), nor a pulpit (though we preach). It is all these together⁶¹.

Escudero’s statement suggests the potential political significance of nutrition in this conjuncture. His voluminous collected works are primarily scientific studies of nutritional illnesses and the biochemistry of metabolism. The *Instituto* published the journal *Revista de Dietologia* which interlaced discourses on social welfare with scientific investigations of metabolism⁶². Escudero sought to intervene in public policy and published widely on both the science and politics of nutrition⁶³. At the Institute women did most of the work and – as Janet King shows of North American female nutritional scientists – largely remain unaccredited⁶⁴. Practical nutritional science was often relegated to the domestic sphere and care of household nutrition seen as women’s work. As feminist scholarship has shown, the labour of care and social reproduction is vastly undertaken by women⁶⁵. The gendered dismissal of nutrition as

⁵⁹ Albuquerque Jr, ‘Weaving Tradition’, 51.

⁶⁰ Bengoa, ‘Nutrición’; Bizzo, ‘Latin America and International Nutrition’.

⁶¹ Escudero, ‘Instituto Nacional’.

⁶² López and Poy, ‘Historia de La Nutrición En La Argentina’.

⁶³ Escudero, *Métodos de Cálculo*; Escudero, *Los Requerimientos Alimentarios Del Hombre Sano y Normal y Las Encuestas de Alimentación* [Alimentary Requirement of a Healthy and Normal Man and Alimentary Research].

⁶⁴ King, ‘Contributions of Women to Human Nutrition’.

⁶⁵ Meehan and Stauss, *Precarious Worlds*.

domestic knowledge may help explain why academic histories of nutrition have not been widely incorporated into geographical thinking about the body. Just as Social Reproduction Theory has demystified the production of labour power as a commodity, so critical research can demystify the gendered dynamics of both nutrition and nutritional science. Certainly, the subject and target of nutritional research in early 20th century Latin America was predominantly the labouring (or potentially labouring) male body. The female body was largely figured as a producer of nutrition through breastmilk, not its subject.

There is a great deal of scope for further research on ideas of the body within the nutritional science of the early 20th century. However, my interest here is in articulating the social and political valency of this science at this particular conjuncture (I use the term ‘conjuncture’ as Kipfer describes it, to delimit a historical moment ‘that articulate[s] the punctual temporality of the event with longer-term forms of historical duration’⁶⁶). The politics of growing nutritional knowledge were simple: these scientists were showing that society as it was constructed was unable to adequately feed many – perhaps most – of its people. They were coming up with new empirical, quantitative and verifiable methods and discourses which appeared to demonstrate the failure of an economic system in the most basic and visceral terms. Castro’s own survey work was done in 1932. Similar analytical approaches which produced similar political ructions were concurrently being undertaken elsewhere, not least in Britain, with the ‘nutritional controversy’ and the Hunger Marches of the 1930s⁶⁷. Exposing that actual wages and welfare could not provide adequate nutrition to the working classes threatened the stability of state and capital structures and fomented radical politics⁶⁸.

One of the finest definitions of the European Renaissance tradition of humanism is that of making man ‘the measure of all things’⁶⁹. Particular ideas of the body emerge alongside particular versions of humanism. As an investigative natural scientist, Castro’s early work studied how the tropical climate influenced basal metabolism. The white, masculine working body at the base of Northern metabolic science was replaced in Castro’s work with the hungry migrant from the *sertão*. In this movement we can see, too, indications of his humanistic approach, for which the measurable body of nutritional science is a crucial subject. But, following Castro, a different nutritional body emerges for humanism⁷⁰. Leonardo da Vinci’s Vitruvian man is replaced by another eight-limbed figure, the *homem-caranguejo* (Figure 4). The charts and tables of his nutritional surveys are a different kind of measure of all things.

⁶⁶ Kipfer, ‘City, Country, Hegemony: Antonio Gramsci’s Spatial Historicism’, 86.

⁶⁷ Mayhew, ‘The 1930s Nutrition Controversy’; Smith, ‘Commentary’; Webster, ‘Health, Welfare and Unemployment during the Depression’; Hannington and Mann, *Unemployed Struggles*.

⁶⁸ Hannington and Mann, *Unemployed Struggles*; For similar, roughly contemporaneous metabolism controversies in Germany, see Treitel, ‘Max Rubner and the Biopolitics of Rational Nutrition’; Lederer and Kral, ‘Theodor Weyl’.

⁶⁹ Cosgrove, ‘Historical Considerations’, 194–95.

⁷⁰ Wynter.

This is a different approach to overturning humanism from what Pithouse calls Césaire's attempt to reconstruct a new humanism made to 'the measure of the world'⁷¹, but, as I will argue below, it can be put in this company. Castro cannot utterly break out of the inheritance of European humanism in the biological sciences and the 'biocentric narrative [which] unevenly imbues the science of the body and the science of knowledge with race'⁷². Sylvia Wynter identifies the need to 'decolonize being'. Far from being a panacea, Castro's theory and praxis of the geography of hunger can nevertheless offer a nutritional, geographical, ecological understanding of the body, which might contribute to the struggle to 'redefine Marx's class struggle in the terms of a "politics of being"' ⁷³. Castro's *homem-caranguejo* can be lined up against Leonardo's Vitruvian Man, in the struggle 'waged over what is to be the descriptive statement of the human'⁷⁴.

Castro's context was very different to the Algerian doctors studied by Fanon under conditions of colonial war⁷⁵, but his Third Worldist scientific work nevertheless attempted to reform the natural science of the body in the circumstances of the Northeast of Brazil. Fanon, of course, was also a clinician⁷⁶. The Brazilian literary critic Roberto Schwarz described the uptake and adaptation of European enlightenment ideas in Brazil as '*ideias fora do lugar*' – 'out of place ideas' ⁷⁷. For Schwarz, the fundamental premises of European liberalism came upon a profound unreality in Brazil, what he called 'an ideological comedy'⁷⁸. (A formulation which recalls Castro's own argument, made in 1930, that the Brazilian intellectual elite lacked 'serious people'⁷⁹.) For Schwarz, whereas in the



Figure 4: Leonardo da Vinci's *Vitruvian Man* (circa 1492). Josué de Castro's *Homem Caranguejo* (circa 1937) from *Documentário do Nordeste* (1959)

⁷¹ Pithouse, "That the Tool", 110–11.

⁷² McKittrick, 'Axis, Bold as Love', 146.

⁷³ McKittrick, *Sylvia Wynter*, 319.

⁷⁴ McKittrick, 319.

⁷⁵ Fanon, 'Medicine and Colonialism'.

⁷⁶ Keller, 'Clinician and Revolutionary'.

⁷⁷ This is my translation. On other translations of '*ideias fora do lugar*' see Conde, Introduction to Chauí, *Between Conformity and Resistance*.

⁷⁸ Schwarz, *Misplaced Ideas*, 20.

⁷⁹ Melo, 'Josué de Castro Antes Da Fome', 146.

European context production relied on relations of exchange, in Brazil it relied on slave labour and the vast landscapes of the *latifundia*. Though Schwarz did characterize these structures as capitalist, he thought their true object lay beyond Brazil, so rendering national social life and cultural production hollow and almost farcical. Arbitrary relations of ‘favour’ came to underpin a social economy built on fundamentally meaningless grounds: ‘in matters of rationality, roles were shuffled: economic science became fantasy and morality, obscurantism equalled realism and responsibility, technical considerations were not practical, and altruism sought to bring about the exploitation of labour’⁸⁰. Schwarz’s analysis recalls that of Sérgio Buarque de Holanda, who sees Brazilians as ‘exiles in [their] own land’⁸¹: ‘in the process of reproducing its social order, Brazil unceasingly affirms and reaffirms European ideas, always improperly’⁸². Schwarz argued that slavery unsettled the bases of liberal humanism, but in an improper way. Abolition came about because wage labour became more profitable than slave labour. In this way ‘the confrontation between humanity and inhumanity, in which no doubt there was a question of justice, ended up in a more earthbound way as a conflict between two modes of investment’⁸³. Schwarz argues that these conditions determined Brazil’s intellectual life well into the period of dependency in the twentieth century. ‘Ideas out of place’ can serve to contextualize Castro’s confrontation with European natural science and its inherited conception of ‘man’, filtered in particular through the tropes of Brazilian racial anthropology. This is to suggest that Castro’s own ideas were ‘out of place’, or ‘improper’, but precisely that they were radical because their intellectual context was that which Schwarz describes. This is to re-articulate Mignolo’s insistence on the importance of asking ‘who, when, why is constructing knowledges’⁸⁴, in a specifically early 20th century Brazilian context. In *Condições da Vida das Classes Operárias no Recife* he contested the biologism of racial anthropology in Brazil⁸⁵, writing on the first page of his 1932 book that the lack of productivity of the racialized working classes of Brazil ‘*não é mal de raça, é mal de fome*’ – ‘is not a flaw of race, but of hunger’⁸⁶. Underpinning this argument is Castro’s humanism, insisting on the inclusion into the body politic of those who were racially maligned as naturally inferior. It was also a class-based humanism: aligning himself with an intellectual and political role model, he quoted the quasi-biopolitical words of doctor and founder of the Argentine socialist party Juan B Justo: ‘nowadays you cannot murder the proletariat, but you can legally make it die of hunger’⁸⁷. His nutritional approach rearticulated how

⁸⁰ Schwarz, *Misplaced Ideas*, 36.

⁸¹ Holanda, *Roots of Brazil*, 1.

⁸² Schwarz, *Misplaced Ideas*, 47.

⁸³ Schwarz, 36.

⁸⁴ Mignolo, ‘Epistemic Disobedience’, 160.

⁸⁵ See Lima, *Mal de Fome*.

⁸⁶ Castro, *As condições de vida da classe operária no Recife*, 11.

⁸⁷ Castro, 12.

European and North American natural science methods could be brought into Brazilian social contexts and laboratories, against racial anthropology.

B. 1940s: From Nutrition to Land

Castro's debate with Freyre came at a delicate time in his public intellectual life and helped him earn a reputation as an independent-minded figure⁸⁸. After his move to Rio in the mid 1930s he became part of the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Brazil and developed relationships with key intellectual figures, including the anthropologist Roquette Pinto and the writer Mário de Andrade, with whom he maintained a long correspondence⁸⁹. His work threatened the corporatist pact between the elite and the emerging working classes in Brazil. Thanks to rising labour organization, but also directly in response to Castro's *Conditions* and other studies that followed it, in 1940 the Brazilian Minimum Wage was introduced⁹⁰. However, its level was inadequate, and it was largely not implemented, particularly in the Northeast. That law marked only a staging post in the struggle against hunger in Brazil, to which Castro dedicated his life, which continues today, still informed by Castro's legacy.

However, the connection between income and nutrition in Castro's work did not yet constitute a structural critique of hunger, and Castro's analysis developed through the 1940s. *Alimentação e Raça* (1936) began with metabolism: 'all the phenomena which take place in our organism consume a portion of energy, and this energy does not come from some mysterious place inside the living being. It enters the human machine with the food that we eat'⁹¹. He began to incorporate a geographical attentiveness into his study of vitamins. Emerging knowledge of vitamins shifted nutrition in the early 20th century from energetics to a more broadly bio-political field in which the environment and the body were in dynamic, non-determinist interconnection by which food provides 'metabolic functions distinct from the supply of sustenance' and the body is understood as relational, contingent on, and implicated in, its environment.⁹² For Castro hunger was not monolithic, but always precisely instantiated. How it manifested – as a lack of vitamins, protein or minerals – was an indicator of the particular historical geography in which the body was embedded. In 1937 he published *Alimentação Brasileira a luz da Geografia Humana* (A Human Geography approach to Brazilian Diet) and his field of enquiry had grown: 'penetrating the dark and complex thicket of the living phenomena of nutrition, [...consists of a] serious and complicated study, with its roots buried deep in the fields of sociology and philosophy,

⁸⁸ Interview with Francisco Bandeira de Melo, Recife, 1997 in Magno, Tânia Elias, *Memória Do Saber*, 653–69.

⁸⁹ Castro, *Semeador de Ideias*, 21; Ana Maria de Castro in Fernandes and Gonçalves, *Josué de Castro*, 28–29.

⁹⁰ Preface by Rita de Cássia Barbosa de Araújo in Castro, *As condições de vida da classe operária no Recife*.

⁹¹ Castro, *Alimentação e Raça*, 17.

⁹² Smith, 'The Emergence of Vitamins as Bio-Political Objects during World War I', 182.

with influences that spread far into the most varied corners of life'⁹³. He therefore turned to geography in order to study hunger 'no more in its partial aspects, but as a whole [...] based on the methods and principles of human geography, capable of allowing a total view of the subject'⁹⁴. As Lima put it, he sought to give 'universal status to the close ties between the biological body and the social body'⁹⁵ – the ecological humanism introduced above.

By the early 1940s Castro was at the cusp of his geographical theory of hunger. *Geografia da Fome* constructed a cartography of the spatial distribution of ecologies, landscapes and agriculture with the spatial distribution of hunger in Brazil. Nutrition and agriculture – both understood spatially and historically – were put into the same analytical frame. For Castro, geography was the most encyclopedic and universalist of sciences. In *Geografia da Fome* he wrote 'I have tried to find a method of study that would give the broadest view of the problem, a perspective in which the implications, influences and connections of its multiple natural and cultural factors could be made intelligible. The only method that might offer such a panorama without uprooting the question from the field of social reality was [...] the interpretive method of modern geographic science'⁹⁶. Part of the holism he found in the geographical method crystallized around an application of 'extensão' – 'extension' – derived from Ratzel, but shed of environmental determinism⁹⁷. Bertoldo Kruse Grande de Arruda has argued that Castro's geography had five analytical-critical intentions. Firstly, geography facilitated a selective description of the world embedded in scientific discourse. Secondly, Castro wanted to re-interpret classical geography and insert it more directly into the problems of society. Thirdly, he wanted to rid geography of its technocratic tone. Fourthly, geography enabled him to produce valid generalizations at the scale of the regional, while opening up geographical investigations to political analysis. Finally, he believed that geography was a path to unravelling uneven spatial development⁹⁸. This multi-faceted approach to rebuilding geography – going beyond what he saw as Vidalian depoliticization and, as Zanoni puts it, breathing new life into an old science⁹⁹ – underpinned the 1946 *Geografia da Fome*, a book that remains 'lively, polemical and seductive' to this day¹⁰⁰. Adding to Arruda's valuable analysis we can suggest that a creative reading of Castro's work up to and including *Geografia da Fome* helps to articulate new

⁹³ Castro, *A Alimentação Brasileira à Luz Da Geografia Humana*, 17.

⁹⁴ Castro, 13.

⁹⁵ Lima, 'Quantity, Quality, Harmony and Adaption'; Ferretti, 'Geographies of Internationalism', 1 March 2018; Prestes, 'O Pensamento de Josué de Castro'.

⁹⁶ Castro, *Geografia Da Fome: O Dilema Brasileiro: Pão Ou Aço*, 34.

⁹⁷ Peake, 'Anthropogeography'.

⁹⁸ Arruda, 'The Geography of Hunger', 547.

⁹⁹ Zanoni, 'Josué de Castro'.

¹⁰⁰ Vasconcelos, 'Josué de Castro and The Geography of Hunger in Brazil', 2717.

spatialities and scales of the body's geography. As André Mayer's preface to *Geografia da Fome* made clear, the book represented a geographical progression from a history of nutritional knowledge¹⁰¹.

In the *Geografia* he deploys his biosociological analysis of hunger as a 'complex of manifestations [which are] simultaneously biological, economic and social'¹⁰². Deploying the 'fertile concept' of 'ecology'¹⁰³, he argued that hunger is not natural, but the product of social and economic conjunctures. Hunger was created and maintained as an act of violence by the powerful, and manifested in bodily metabolism as starvation, as well as in chronic and hidden forms which impede specific groups from not only flourishing, but surviving. This biology emerges thanks to socio-spatial processes, and the history of colonialism. Food is a 'tenacious force'¹⁰⁴: 'it is perhaps through the nutritional link that the environment – soil and climate – even though indirectly, exerts its most decisive influence on the physical vigour, productive capacity and resistance to disease of human groups'¹⁰⁵. The socio-economic structure of society is crystallized and reproduced in the body. Hunger is 'biological slavery': 'we will not defend, therefore, any primacy in terms of Brazilian social evolution: either the primacy of the biological over the cultural, nor of the cultural over the biological'¹⁰⁶.



Figure 5: Josué de Castro (centre) with professors and researchers at the Laboratory of the *Instituto Nacional de Nutrição* at the Universidade do Brasil, 1947. Author Unknown. Personal Archive, Josué de Castro – FUNDAJ. Fotografias

By the time of publishing *Geografia da Fome* in 1946 Castro's work on hunger was more than ever associated with a praxis of public nutrition. Through attending to the recursive relationship between Castro's praxis and his theory we can get a sense of the multiple scales at which nutritional politics play out. Castro published *Geografia da Fome* in the same year that he founded the *Instituto de Nutrição* (IN). The IN Castro founded in Rio de Janeiro (Figure 5) mirrored the *Instituto* he had visited in Buenos Aires a few years before: a charismatic male scientist led it; women activists, educators and scientists did the work, often anonymously¹⁰⁷. The impact of the Argentine institute on the Brazilian was formative; even the calorific tables used in

¹⁰¹ Castro, *Geografia da Fome*, 1:1–2.

¹⁰² Castro, *Geografia Da Fome*, 19–20.

¹⁰³ Castro, 21.

¹⁰⁴ Castro, *Alimentação e Raça*, 140.

¹⁰⁵ Castro and World Federation of Scientific Workers, *Hunger and Food*, 5.

¹⁰⁶ Castro, *Geografia Da Fome: O Dilema Brasileiro: Pão Ou Aço*, 40.

¹⁰⁷ The successor of the IN, now part of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, bears his name and its archive was consulted for this paper.

research and teaching in Rio were those developed by Escudero and his colleagues in Buenos Aires¹⁰⁸. The IN took up a public, pedagogic, even “civilizing”, role¹⁰⁹. Castro was part of a wider Brazilian discourse. For example, Dante Costa was a colleague of Castro’s at this time. He wrote on nutrition and society (eg *Alimentação e Progresso*, 1951) as well as on socialism in Brazil (*O Socialismo*, 1954). His *Tratado de Nutrição* (1947) told the history of nutrition from Antoine Lavoisier to Justus von Liebig yet, unlike Castro, Costa emphasized the effects of nutrition on society rather than the systemic forces creating malnutrition. Costa, however, articulated the spatiality of the newly formed discipline in terms of what he called the “triple aspect” of nutrition: ‘the clinical, in hospitals; the experimental, in research laboratories; the social, in the organization of public services of food’¹¹⁰. Costa leaves out the domestic sphere where most nutritional activity, knowledge and politics occur. Yet Castro spanned the other three fields as director of the public institutions which became the *Serviço Técnico da Alimentação Nacional* (The Technical Service for National Food Supply) (*STAN*) and the *Serviço de Alimentação da Previdência Social* (Social Security Food Service) (*SAPS*).

In 1944, Castro launched the journal *Arquivos Brasileiros de Nutrição*, which he edited, initially through SAPS and after 1946 through the IN. It published nutritional science, metabolic bio-chemistry and political analysis. In the first editorial Castro lauded the creation of an internationally recognized Brazilian school of nutritional science capable of confronting the new urban-industrial society emerging in Brazil. Like Escudero, Castro sought to intervene across public life, placing nutrition at the centre of analysis of Brazilian politics and society. As Helder Remigio Amorim has recently shown, his work during the Second World War had seen him in a sometimes tense relationship with the state. He worked on behalf of the state to improve the food industry’s techniques in support of producing a better-fed army. He visited the United States and worked inside state institutions. However, as Amorim notes, after the war there was a significant shift in both his analytical perspective and his relationship with the state¹¹¹. This can be traced in his editorial role at the *Arquivos*, which became increasingly critical.

He called, in the second edition, for a National Vitamin Campaign, citing surveys (not least his own) showing vast nutritional deficiencies among the population (1944, volume 1.2). He demanded Ministers of Agriculture address the imbalance between food supply and exploitative agriculture for export (1946, volume 2.2), critiqued national educational plans by pushing for the inclusion of nutritional education in their remit (1947 volumes 3.4 and 3.2), sought to regularize school lunches (May 1948, volume 5.3) and discussed national agricultural production (eg 1949, volume 6.5). Despite attention in public policy and scientific research, and increasing state activity in direct feeding and education, the crisis of hunger

¹⁰⁸ The archive of the IN includes blank versions from the early 1940s.

¹⁰⁹ Bizzo and Lima, ‘O Projeto Civilizatório Nacional Do Instituto de Nutrição Da Universidade Do Brasil (1946-1960)’.

¹¹⁰ Costa, *Tratado de Nutrição*.

¹¹¹ Amorim, ‘Em Tempos’, 60.

in Brazil remained vastly beyond the reach of these interventions¹¹². Foucauldian histories of the authoritarian modernism of the *Estado Novo* regime have seen nutritional science as a form of disciplinary state action¹¹³. Certainly, Castro's practical activities unfolded at the nexus of science and politics¹¹⁴, but he was not always aligned with an authoritarian state that was in any case fractured and contested.

Analysing Castro's work in this period finds him often in the laboratory, conducting empirical natural scientific experiments. As the discussion of Schwarz, above, introduced, it is important to place this kind of work within flows of colonial, neo-colonial and imperial power and resources. Castro takes a particular, interstitial role in the history of anti-colonial thought: not only a critical social scientist and political activist, but also a natural scientist. Katherine McKittrick cites Aimé Césaire, writing in 1946, that 'scientific knowledge enumerates, measures, classifies and kills'¹¹⁵. An anti-colonial practice of nutritional science does not fit well within this formulation – nor perhaps does Fanon's own clinical practice, increasingly the subject of academic research as new archives and translations are being published¹¹⁶ – which nevertheless raises important questions about the nature and provenance of the methods Castro was deploying, and the form of the knowledge he was producing. In this period Castro was also working in an international context, part of the Food and Agriculture Organization's Standing Advisory Committee on Nutrition from 1947. This became a joint FAO and World Health Organization project from 1949. The Joint Committee had ten members, including other scientists from the Third World, Dr V N Patwardhan from India and Dr J Salcedo from the Philippines. It produced reports on nutritional minimums, technical assistance, childhood nutrition and more¹¹⁷. The Committee is interesting not least because it was a means to connect questions of nutrition with those of agriculture: a still under-emphasized connection in geography. The Committee's reports are jointly authored so it isn't possible to identify Castro's influence for certain, but it picked up on some of his particular concerns – for instance launching a project on synthetic vitamins in underdeveloped countries¹¹⁸ – and we can see Castro's involvement in long term projects such as that on Kwashiorkor. Castro also organized the FAO's 1950 conference in Rio de Janeiro, which sought to enhance and institutionalize Latin American scientific knowledge at the scale of the international¹¹⁹. Castro's work raises the

¹¹² Costa, *Tratado de Nutrição*, 23.

¹¹³ Barros Bezerra, 'Educação Alimentar'.

¹¹⁴ Vasconcelos and Batista Filho, 'História Do Campo Da Alimentação e Nutrição'.

¹¹⁵ McKittrick, 'Science Quarrels Sculpture', 116.

¹¹⁶ Fanon, *Alienation and Freedom*.

¹¹⁷ Various, 'Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Nutrition: Report on the First Session'.

¹¹⁸ Various, 'Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Nutrition 1949: Manufacture of Synthetic Vitamins in Underdeveloped Nations'.

¹¹⁹ Anonymous, 'Comments on the Second Conference on Nutrition Problems in Latin America: Confidential'.

question of how attempts by scientists from the South (in Castro's case as a middle-class Brazilian of mixed heritage¹²⁰) to construct the human differently – but nevertheless through natural scientific discourse¹²¹ – fit into histories of scientific racism and the racial production of 'Man' through science. This exploration of Castro's nutritional work, and its relationship with his humanism, adds one strand to such investigations.

Critically, for Castro, nutrition was a site of radical critique and praxis, and land was the nub of this radicalism. He understood land in broad terms¹²². The significance of this cannot be overstated. Castro made life-long enemies of the reactionary Brazilian plantation elites¹²³. He saw in the *latifundia* the nutrients of Brazilian soil being exported abroad as coffee and sugar to be stirred into European cups or as cotton to be worn on European backs. The vast land-holdings of the *latifundia* system – inherited from colonialism and tied to international capital¹²⁴ – imposed hunger on the Brazilian poor through its control of national economic policy and enforcement of landlessness. The *latifundia* violently suppressed both subsistence agriculture and economic reform to maintain its low-productivity, high land-use system. Protein and vitamin deficiency, goitre, tuberculosis, infant mortality and kwashiorkor were therefore not only outcomes, but necessary factors in this system. Plantations were more than merely economic apparatuses. They were totalising institutions of enormous political, social, ecological and spatial power in the region of the Northeast of Brazil. George Beckford – one of what has been called the plantation school of economic historians of the University of the West Indies in the 1960s and 1970s¹²⁵ – theorized plantations as 'instruments of colonization': 'where wealth was to be provided by the supply of agricultural produce, much more was usually required of the colonizing country. In addition to military and administrative organization, an institutional framework for the bringing together of land, labour, capital, management and technology had to be provided'¹²⁶.

In Castro's writing and praxis the role of the plantation – a reasonable translation of *latifundio*, although the latter denotes specific features too – is profoundly important to the geography of hunger. Indeed, it is the subject through which his interdisciplinary approach emerges most clearly, and through which he elucidates how he balances the natural and the social in geographical explanation:

¹²⁰ García, 'Biografía Intelectual', 22–27.

¹²¹ See also McPherson and Wehrli, *Beyond Geopolitics*.

¹²² For a related discussion of anti-colonial concepts of land in Amílcar Cabral's work see Parsa, 'Review: Amílcar Cabral, Resistance and Decolonization', 1032–34.

¹²³ Julião, *Cambão - The Yoke: The Hidden Face of Brazil*, 50–51.

¹²⁴ Castro, *Death in the Northeast*, 86–116.

¹²⁵ Scott, 'The Re-Enchantment of Humanism', 119–21.

¹²⁶ George L Beckford, *Persistent Poverty*, 30–31.

‘Seeking to appreciate biological factors is not to denigrate the importance of cultural factors, internal to the character of the agrarian-feudal plantationism that has so deformed the development of Brazilian society. These are undeniable. What we will try to show is that the shaping power of economic and cultural forces make themselves felt on man, and on human groups, in the final analysis through a biological mechanism: through nutritional deficiencies that monoculture imposes itself, through hunger that the plantation regenerates, and so on’¹²⁷.

This important passage places physiological hunger within a broader field of social analysis. Biological hunger is created by socio-economic forces, but that biological hunger plays into the socio-economic system through the specific textures of their effect in bodies. This is not a determinist approach, but an idiosyncratic kind of materialist, geographical and scalar form of socio-biological analysis. The plantation is at the heart of this. In both *Geografia* and *Geopolítica da Fome* Castro examines the *latifundia* as a form of spatial control, both in terms of Brazil¹²⁸ and other areas of hunger. He analyses the American South, bringing together the ecologist Howard Odum and the Swedish sociologist Gunnar Myrdal to articulate ‘that vicious circle of misery – monoculture, tenancy, soil exhaustion, and erosion’¹²⁹. Castro is at pains to emphasize the connections between hunger and soil erosion: ‘caught in this net of negative factors – inadequate production, worn out soils, and low salaries – the human beings of the region necessarily suffer from [...] a diet both insufficient and incomplete’¹³⁰. In Brazil, meanwhile, ‘hunger has been chiefly created by the inhuman exploitation of colonial riches by the *latifundia* and one-crop culture which lays waste to the colony, so that the exploiting country can take too cheaply the raw materials its prosperous industrial economy requires’¹³¹. Castro’s analysis can be placed alongside the genealogy of plantation scholarship traced and deployed by Katherine McKittrick, Clyde Woods and Sylvia Wynter¹³². Such work on the historical geographies of colonial extraction and its spatial forms offer another genealogy for scholarship that can attest to and challenge the geography of hunger.

In the Northeast, the plantations overwhelmingly grew sugar. For centuries, and up to the end of the twentieth century, sugar was the dominant social force in Northeast Brazil, defining its political

¹²⁷ Castro, *Geografia Da Fome*, 27–28.

¹²⁸ Castro, *Geography of Hunger*, 88–89.

¹²⁹ Castro, 116.

¹³⁰ Castro, 117.

¹³¹ Castro, 16.

¹³² George L Beckford, *Persistent Poverty*; Scott, ‘The Re-Enchantment of Humanism’; McKittrick, ‘On Plantations, Prisons, and a Black Sense of Place’.

economy and human geography¹³³. Castro saw Latin American sugar as the very foundation of European capitalism¹³⁴. Sugar has been at the very heart of many of the most important social struggles in Northeastern political history¹³⁵, and interpretations of the role of sugar in national economic life has long been central to Brazilian social thought. From Sergio Buarque de Holanda to Caio Prado Junior and Manuel Correia de Andrade, the nature of the Brazilian plantation system – as feudal, pre-capitalist, mercantile or capitalist – has been at the crux of some of the most important analyses of the Brazilian condition and the structure of the national economy. In the Northeast sugar furnished the elite with wealth, and the society, which its plantation form produced, was the subject of Gilberto Freyre's seminal sociological mystifications of Brazilian social history. Castro's own analysis argued that there were feudal remnants within the plantation society of the Northeast, and he placed an even greater emphasis on the role of colonialism and imperialism than on capital. As Gadiel Perruci argued in 1978, the sugar society of the Northeast fixed in place structures of domination inherited from the colonial period¹³⁶. *Mutatis mutandis*, the systems of agro-capital in place today across Brazil continue to be a barrier to social transformation¹³⁷. Even today, urban Northeast Brazil is racked by a double nutritional crisis associated with sugar: both malnutrition associated with poverty, and malnutrition in the form of diabetes. The populations affected often overlap¹³⁸. In spite of rapid changes, the distribution of land remains critical to the failure of the current agricultural regime in Brazil to deliver food security, particularly in rural contexts, and in terms of the rights of people to remain on their land¹³⁹. This is to emphasize the importance of the connection between nutrition and agriculture. The intellectual intersection between these two fields – both in terms of geographical enquiry, and agricultural practice – is more necessary than ever as the food system is ever more penetrated by technological capital, industrial foodstuffs and mass-production at ever growing scales.

Drawing on Castro, Nancy Scheper-Hughes describes how the connections between hunger, drought and race in the Northeast can be mapped by sugar, both its production and consumption: it is 'a particularly predatory crop that has dominated both the natural and the social landscape'¹⁴⁰. It is around sugar that Castro's ecological and biological concerns move towards one another, seeing the land and

¹³³ See Andrade, *Land and People*.

¹³⁴ Castro, 'A La Recherche de l'Amérique Latine', 72.

¹³⁵ Rogers, *The Deepest Wounds*.

¹³⁶ Perruci, *A República Das Usinas*.

¹³⁷ We can cite, for instance, the vital importance of the well-organized *ruralista* block in the Brazilian congress, who were key to the impeachment of Dilma Rousseff. This goes beyond sugar, but its historical continuities are clear.

¹³⁸ Interview with leading Public Health Official in Recife in London, 1st November 2017.

¹³⁹ Gonçalves, 'Geografia Da Riqueza, Fome e Meio Ambiente'.

¹⁴⁰ Scheper-hughes, *Death Without Weeping*, 122.

its population as suffering the same metabolic disease¹⁴¹. One of the crucial features of the sugar economy can be found exactly at the point of meeting between nutrition – diet – and land. In the most basic terms: sugar workers could not grow their own vegetables. Not only because they were working low wages on long hours, but because they were explicitly banned from doing so. As the North American documentary made about the Northeast in 1964 put it, ‘sugar is almost everywhere. Vegetables for the peasants would crowd out the landowner’s cash crop’¹⁴², Castro and his predecessors have argued, was one of the reasons for hunger and malnutrition in the sugar zones¹⁴³. The later dependency theorist Ruy Mauro Marini argued that imports of cheap sugar to Britain can be directly articulated with the super-exploitation of bodies in Latin America and the Caribbean. Marini argues that the calorific boon to Northern industrial capitalism was enabled by the further encroachment on the bodily integrity of the plantation labourer¹⁴⁴. In one sense, Castro provides the geographical analysis underpinning precisely Marini’s argument¹⁴⁵. It is those labourers who form the foundation of Castro’s analysis of the geography of hunger, as well as the foundation of his successors in the Latin American dependency school.

His work also prefigures the analysis of more recent historians of hunger such as that of Mike Davis in *Late Victorian Holocausts*¹⁴⁶, and the emphasis on the production of scarcity, increasing vulnerability and hunger amidst abundance theorized by scholars such as Michael Watts, Philip McMichael¹⁴⁷ and David Nally¹⁴⁸. Attesting in another way to the lasting value of Castro’s theory of hunger are vast swathes of rural resistance spear-headed by the Landless Worker’s Movement, the *Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra* (MST). These have shown the centrality of land to rural social justice in Brazil. Castro was involved in the precursor of the MST, the Northeastern Peasant Leagues of the 1940s and 50s¹⁴⁹. The Peasant Leagues, which established the MST’s most powerful tactic, land occupation, sought radical agrarian reform, and were perceived by the Brazilian right and the United States in the early 1960s as an existential threat. Its leaders still cite Castro as an inspiration¹⁵⁰. The

¹⁴¹ For further discussion see Davies, ‘Unwrapping the Oxo Cube: Josué de Castro and the Intellectual History of Metabolism’.

¹⁴² Rogers, ‘The Troubled Land’.

¹⁴³ Linhart, *O açúcar e a fome*, 42–52.

¹⁴⁴ Higginbottom, ‘Underdevelopment as Super-Exploitation: Marini’s Political Economic Thought Revisited’; Osorio, ‘Dialectics, Superexploitation, and Dependency’; Sotelo Valencia, ‘Latin America’.

¹⁴⁵ Marini, *Subdesarrollo y Revolución*, 21–25.

¹⁴⁶ Davis, *Late Victorian Holocausts: El Niño Famines and the Making of the Third World*.

¹⁴⁷ McMichael, ‘Feeding the World’.

¹⁴⁸ Nally, ‘“That Coming Storm”’.

¹⁴⁹ For a critical history of rural movements from 1961 see Pereira, *The End of the Peasantry*.

¹⁵⁰ Stédile, *A questão agrária no Brasil*.

Leagues, however, faded in significance even before the coup of 1964, challenged by both the church and the rise of rural unions¹⁵¹. Castro himself was increasingly distanced from them by the early 1960s.

Nevertheless, his political and scientific work connecting nutrition and agrarian reform was far reaching. The disciplinary shift from nutrition to geography placed the dietary metabolic relation to nature in direct articulation with spatial, socio-economic and political processes in particular historical geographies¹⁵². This constituted a metabolic critique of society that can complement and extend the history of political ecology's understanding of socio-natural metabolism¹⁵³. It was from and through an attention to the precise metabolic condition of hunger and malnutrition that he articulated his socio-political critique of hunger as produced by uneven relations between nature and society. Manuel Correia de Andrade, one of his most important successors and another key Northeastern geographer, emphasized Castro's heterodox geography: 'he didn't participate in the Association of Brazilian Geographers [...] his line of thought was different, emerging from studying the Brazilian problematic itself, through non-geographical pathways, but which led to Geography, above all in terms of epistemology and methodology'¹⁵⁴. Castro's geography was, in Andrade's felicitous formulation – as I noted in the introduction, providing an inversion and alternative history to Driver's 'geography militant' – 'geography combatant'¹⁵⁵, that emerged politically in the connection between land and nutrition, and intellectually in the movement from the physiological study of metabolism to the geographical analysis of underdevelopment.

Having traced Castro's intellectual development over the first forty years of his life, in the rest of this chapter I turn to a deeper analysis of how we might move from and develop an understanding of the geography of hunger as a geographical philosophy of praxis. I do so by investigating the meaning and scope first of hunger and the human subject, then of geography, and finally of a metabolic humanism that emerges from Castro's work. I begin from hunger.

C. Hunger and humanism

Castro understands hunger as a negative drive that must be fulfilled for the human subject to be able to realize itself. It is the fundamental characteristic of life, both biologically and sociologically. As a drive, it is produced and satiated socially. With hunger as a core determinant the figure of the human is not a

¹⁵¹ Pereira, 'O Declínio das Ligas Camponesas'.

¹⁵² Alves, 'A Contribuição de Josué de Castro'.

¹⁵³ For a discussion of how this work on metabolism connects to contemporary Political Ecologies of the body, sugar and social reproduction see Davies, 'Unwrapping the Oxo Cube: Josué de Castro and the Intellectual History of Metabolism'.

¹⁵⁴ Andrade, 'Josué de Castro e Uma Geografia Combatente'.

¹⁵⁵ Andrade.

liberal, possessive individual, but a socially and ecologically determined subject. To expand on this question – to connect hunger, humanism and political ecology – I want to associate him with two political philosophers for whom hunger is central to their understanding both of the human subject and of political and philosophical process, the German Ernst Bloch and the Argentinian Enrique Dussel.

Bloch wrote, in Volume One of *The Principle of Hope*, that ‘very little, all too little has been said so far about hunger’¹⁵⁶. Kathi Weeks notes that for Bloch hunger figures ‘as a kind of minimal ontological force’¹⁵⁷ in his analysis. For Castro this ‘minimal ontological force’ also underpinned a philosophy of praxis, in which the struggle against hunger was the first principle of politics, and the right to eat was fundamental¹⁵⁸. The primary object of politics should be ‘before anything an economy of subsistence: give to each person the indispensable minimum’¹⁵⁹. What kind of praxis this necessitated was an insistent question, at many scales. The myriad ways to tackle the geography of hunger – global social transformation, agrarian reform, school meals, synthetic vitamins, urban labour organization, international institutions, global campaigns – were the complex problems which drove his political praxis, just as hunger was the subject that drove his theoretical analysis. In practical, political terms we should draw a genealogy between Castro’s humanism – grounded as it was in fierce local, national and international debates over food and land – and the peasant movement *Via Campesina*’s ‘sophisticated attempt at developing a grounded, localized and yet international humanism around the food system’¹⁶⁰.

In this section I want to explore further the question of hunger itself in Castro’s humanism and his geography of hunger. In 1952 Castro wrote, ‘I believe in the biological and social power of necessity, which at the most critical moments in history always leads man to the way of survival’¹⁶¹. The concept of ‘biological and social’ necessity must be correlated with his argument elsewhere that ‘it is through hunger that the *latifundio* proceeds’¹⁶². Hunger is, as Weeks puts it, a ‘thoroughly historically variable’ that ‘urges humans forward to extend themselves and become more’¹⁶³. The biology of the human is reciprocally bound into social processes. Castro’s understanding of hunger as a drive is influenced by his reading of Freud and Spinoza: ‘it is strange to find that [hunger’s] narrow aspects of sensation, what Spinoza called the impulse and instinct that has served as the motive force of human evolution, have

¹⁵⁶ Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, 1:65.

¹⁵⁷ Weeks, *The Problem with Work*, 249.

¹⁵⁸ Castro, *Ensaio de biologia social*, 188.

¹⁵⁹ Castro, 187.

¹⁶⁰ Patel, ‘Global Fascism Revolutionary Humanism and the Ethics of Food Sovereignty’, 81.

¹⁶¹ Castro, *Geography of Hunger*, 28.

¹⁶² Castro, *Geografia Da Fome: O Dilema Brasileiro: Pão Ou Aço*, 31.

¹⁶³ Weeks, *The Problem with Work*, 249. We find aesthetic expressions of hunger as an extending force in Castro’s *homem-caranguejo* [man-crab], the family of Graciliano Ramos’ *Vidas Secas* [Barren Lives], and in the other novels and films Castro draws upon, such as Knut Hamsun’s *Sult* [Hunger].

been ignored; but it is even more curious to observe the oppressive silence that has surrounded its broader influence as a universal calamity'¹⁶⁴. These two ways of seeing hunger are both important. Hunger as a worldwide calamity is the sweeping subject of his work, but hunger as 'impulse and instinct' underpins it in important ways and helps explain Castro's idea of social change.

Castro provides a clear political analysis of why he thought hunger as a social calamity had been overlooked: 'it was to the advantage of economic imperialism and international commerce, both controlled by profit-seeking minorities, that the production, distribution and consumption of food products be regarded as purely business matters rather than as phenomena of highest importance to society as a whole'¹⁶⁵. In terms of impulse and instinct, on the other hand, Castro figures the drive to conquer hunger as a positive force of necessity. He writes that 'hunger itself will be the guiding force, the mainspring of a social revolution that can gradually draw the world back from the abyss which threatens to swallow our civilization much more greedily than the oceans threaten to swallow our soils. This faith makes me an optimist'¹⁶⁶. This is a curious kind of optimism, founded in a particular kind of humanism. While it might seem an under-theorized idea of social change, the depth of his analysis of hunger as a biological and sociological force – its nutritional and geographical ontology – should be read into this idea of 'guiding force'. However, the transposition of necessity into politics is not straightforward: it is a question of political struggle, even as the drive to survival has a structuring power.

Nik Heynen has outlined a '*really* radical geography' oriented towards survival: 'every child's life and death should be used to remind us all of what radical geography should first and foremost care about. The nameless and faceless people represented as "percent increase" in the demand for emergency food [...] can help us refocus our intellectual and political efforts, to reconfigure our radical compasses. All of these cases, profound and banal, should make us angry and tearful, outraged and determined'¹⁶⁷. Heynen's 'Really Radical Geography' is explicitly Blochian, but his repetition of the staggering statistics of hunger also has a distinctively Castroian tenor to it: 'it is [not] doctrinaire to suggest that without food, human bodies cannot exist. This totalizing meta-reality cannot be disguised by difference, processes of othering or intellectual disagreement'¹⁶⁸. Castro, Bloch and Heynen share the idea that the beginning of utopia is a world without hunger, and persistently demanding that world is radicalism's opening gambit.

¹⁶⁴ Castro, *Geography of Hunger*, 14.

¹⁶⁵ Castro, 7.

¹⁶⁶ Castro, 28.

¹⁶⁷ Heynen, "'But It's Alright, Ma, It's Life, and Life Only'", 919.

¹⁶⁸ Heynen, 921.

Insistence itself is central to how hunger as drive becomes a geography oriented towards survival. Bloch argues that ‘sympathy with the starving is the only widespread sympathy there is [...] the cry of hunger is probably the strongest single cry that can be directly presented [...] the stomach is the first lamp into which oil must be poured’¹⁶⁹. This sympathy derives from the fact that hunger is in part what is common – all of us have been hungry and all have demanded food urgently, not least as infants – and what is alien: the hunger of the starving is beyond the imagination of those who live satiated. Dussel’s work provides a way of translating hunger into a philosophical discourse, through an interpellative figure¹⁷⁰ of the other expressing their hunger¹⁷¹. For Dussel, the real is to be found in exteriority, that which is other to Being.

Among the real things that retain exteriority to Being, one is found that has a history, a biography, freedom: another person [...] All of this acquires practical reality when someone says, “I’m hungry!” The hunger of the oppressed, of the poor, is an effect of an unjust system. As such, it has no place in the system. [...] because it is negativity, “lack of” [,] [...] non-being in the world. Hunger as such is the practical exteriority of, or the most subversive internal transcendental against, the system: the total and insurmountable “beyond”.¹⁷²

As Nelson Maldonado-Torres puts it, the cry is ‘the first instance that reveals the coloniality of Being [...] it is the cry that animates the birth of theory and critical thought’¹⁷³. In defending a humanist geography Anne Buttimer defines humanism as ‘the liberation cry of humanity’¹⁷⁴. Buttimer does not address a specifically anti-colonial humanism, or hunger as such. Meanwhile for Dussel – as for Fanon, Weheliye and Castro – the primal cry is that of hunger. From his earliest work Castro sought to attest to, and analyse, the cry of hunger. Attesting to hunger was itself a radical position¹⁷⁵. Furthermore, his political and theoretical praxis was radical precisely because, as Dussel continued, ‘to satiate structurally the hunger of the oppressed is to change radically the system’¹⁷⁶. As Castro understood social reality by ‘develop[ing] a science from the manifestation of the lowest standard of living in its severest expression: hunger’¹⁷⁷, the geography of hunger as a negative geography is in syncopation with Enrique Dussel’s philosophy of liberation, which begins from ‘the negativity of starvation as a starting

¹⁶⁹ Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, 1:65.

¹⁷⁰ ‘Reason of the Other: “Interpellation” as Speech-Act’ in Dussel, *Underside of Modernity*, 19–48.

¹⁷¹ See also Pelluchon and Smith, *Nourishment*, 155–57.

¹⁷² Dussel, *Philosophy of Liberation*, 41–42.

¹⁷³ Maldonado-Torres, ‘On the Coloniality of Being’, 256.

¹⁷⁴ Buttimer, ‘Geography, Humanism, and Global Concern’, 1.

¹⁷⁵ Castree et al., *The Point Is to Change It*, 12:2–3.

¹⁷⁶ Dussel, *Philosophy of Liberation*, 41–42.

¹⁷⁷ Anna Maria de Castro quoted in Gonçalves, ‘Josué, nunca vi tamanho desgraça’.

point'¹⁷⁸. Dussel developed a philosophical system on the grounds of the social reality that Castro described and analysed as the geography of hunger. He sought to 'begin a philosophical discourse from the periphery, from the oppressed,' taking 'geopolitical space seriously'. 'To be born', he wrote, 'at the North Pole or in Chiapas is not the same thing as to be born in New York City'¹⁷⁹. In this formulation we can also perhaps see Castro's influence. In Paris in 1964 Dussel organized a series of seminars as a 'Latin American Week'. The central theme was Latin American Catholic Humanism. Castro took part, and it culminated in an edition of the magazine *Esprit* edited by Dussel¹⁸⁰. In his piece Castro wrote that 'total reality cannot be grasped from the outset, independent from the perspective of the viewer; reality seen from Moscow has nothing to do with reality seen from Washington'¹⁸¹. Dussel's is a peculiarly geographical philosophy, which nevertheless has been little explored in Anglophone geography. Dussel also suggests that a philosophy of liberation should 'recuperate, from Marx, the ecological sense'¹⁸². There would be a great deal to be gained from an exploration of the philosophy of liberation's interconnections with and possibilities for political ecology.

Through Dussel we can see the broader significance of Castro's avowedly negative starting point. Dussel recalls his encounter with the Frankfurt School whose 'anthropological materiality, [...] was perceptibly close to our situation in an impoverished, starving, and suffering Latin America. In the Southern Cone, the multitude of demonstrations shouted: "bread, peace, and work!" three necessities that refer strictly to life, to the reproduction of its corporeal content'¹⁸³. Castro's work on hunger was important in representing and framing this Latin American context. For instance, he is quoted at the opening of the deeply influential revolutionary film by the Argentine film makers Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino's *Hora de los Hornos* [Hour of the Furnaces]. For Dussel, the materiality of philosophy is 'corporeal vulnerability', established in dialogue with the Frankfurt School's "negative" materiality.

We can see Castro's humanism of the hungry through this lens of vulnerability and negativity. His humanism also echoes more recent formulations which base humanism on suffering and precarity. For example, Alexander Weheliye argues that 'once suffering that results from political violence severs its ties with liberal individualism, which would position this anguish in the realm of a dehumanizing exception, we can commence to think of suffering and enfleshment as integral to humanity'¹⁸⁴. Indeed,

¹⁷⁸ Dussel, 'From Critical Theory to the Philosophy of Liberation: Some Themes for Dialogue', 22; See also Maldonado-Torres, 'On the Coloniality of Being', 254–56.

¹⁷⁹ Dussel, *Philosophy of Liberation*, 2.

¹⁸⁰ See Dussel, 'Vers Une Histoire'; Castro, 'A La Recherche de l'Amérique Latine'.

¹⁸¹ Castro, 'A La Recherche de l'Amérique Latine', 66.

¹⁸² 'Liberation Philosophy from the Praxis of the Oppressed' in Dussel, *Underside of Modernity*, 13.

¹⁸³ Dussel, 'From Critical Theory to the Philosophy of Liberation: Some Themes for Dialogue', 17.

¹⁸⁴ Weheliye, *Habeas Viscus*, 14.

Marx also prefaced being human with suffering: ‘to be sensuous is to *suffer*. Man as an objective, sensuous being is therefore a *suffering* being’¹⁸⁵. Weheliye specifically understands hunger (including CLR James’ hunger strike) as political violence, closely recalling one of Castro’s key interventions. Black feminist thought, Weheliye suggests, can build a new humanism against ‘the genocidal shackles of [liberal humanist subject] Man.’ Here, humanity is ‘hungered into being’¹⁸⁶, and begins from ‘imagining the relational ontological totality of the human’¹⁸⁷. (It is interesting to note how this ‘relational ontological totality’ of being also opens onto the concerns of mesology and the question of space and nature as functions of being emergent from recent geographical work in France drawing on twentieth century Japanese philosophy¹⁸⁸). Hunger, as Marx had it, is the need of the body for something outside of itself: ‘*Hunger* is a natural *need*; it therefore needs a *nature* outside itself, an *object* outside itself, in order to satisfy itself, to be stilled. Hunger is an acknowledged need of my body for an *object* existing outside it, indispensable to its integration and to the expression of its essential being’¹⁸⁹. The binary of self/world is overcome at the biophysical and ontological level. Castro’s own humanism was built on the struggle of the hungry inhabitants of the marshy outskirts of Recife. In Alexander Weheliye’s terms, ‘the particular assemblage of humanity’ which needs to ground an anti-colonial humanism is ‘*habeas viscus*, which [...] insists on the importance of miniscule movements, glimmers of hope, scraps of food’¹⁹⁰.

Hunger also set the terms of Castro’s humanism, as it did for his geography. As such, his geography has a profoundly negative orientation:

‘The “Geography of Hunger” may well strike the reader as a strange expression. For geography, in the usual sense of the word, has always dealt more with the positive and favourable aspects of the world than with its negative and unfavourable side. Geographers have studied the wealth of the earth and the victories of man rather than his deprivations and failures. In our own time, the science of “human geography” has set out to write the epic of human toil [...] and to record everything that man, as a geographic factor, has done to alter his natural environment. The “Geography of Hunger” takes up a different aspect of the relations between man and nature. It deals with precisely those things that man has not done, with the tasks for which he lacked the knowledge or the will. It explores the geographical possibilities of which he has not taken

¹⁸⁵ Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, 157.

¹⁸⁶ Weheliye, *Habeas Viscus*, 136.

¹⁸⁷ Weheliye, 4.

¹⁸⁸ Berque, ‘Offspring’; Berque, ‘The Perceptive Relation in Mesology’; Pelluchon, ‘What Does It Mean to Replace Ecology with Mesology and Resources with Nourishment?’; Alexandre, ‘Is Space a Part of Being?’

¹⁸⁹ Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, 157; See also Heynen, ‘Bending the Bars of Empire’, 409–10.

¹⁹⁰ Weheliye, *Habeas Viscus*, 12.

advantage, and the opportunities he has wasted. This, then, is a geography, not of human accomplishment, but of human poverty and distress'¹⁹¹.

We do not need to accept Castro's characterization of the rest of human geography as an essentially celebratory science in order to see the connections between a geography that starts from waste, failure, 'poverty and distress' and the radical humanism Weheliye describes. Castro overturns the starting point of regional geography to turn geography into a negative science, attempting to understand the spatial, social and natural production of lack, injustice and bodily suffering. Elaine Scarry wrote:

'When one hears about another person's physical pain, the events happening within the interior of that person's body may seem to have the remote character of some deep subterranean fact, belonging to an invisible geography that, however portentous, has no reality because it has not yet manifested itself on the visible surface of the earth'¹⁹².

Hunger and pain have much in common: but for Castro hunger is not an invisible geography, not an unreal fact, but a substantially real and mappable one, that can be seen and called to account in landscapes, infrastructures and politics. Doing so was a project that was laced with Castro's quasi-utopian hope that articulating the cry and demand of hunger – and its geography – could change the world. This hope was a necessary function of his radical humanism.

This radicalism was intimately tied to a conception of the human as metabolically connected to nature. A metabolic humanism is not a reduction to the body, but an elevation of its constant reproduction through socio-natural processes in geographical space and inside scalar, social, political and economic processes. In this way humanism is not a shrinking, but an expansive conception. It is a geographical humanism, based on a nutritional understanding of the body's relationship to its environment. How does this relate to critiques of humanism in contemporary geography? Kristen Simonson has argued that

'the advance of anti-humanism and posthumanism within academic geography has primarily taken the form of (1) a travel from the self-containing subject towards subjectivities as relational effects of arrangements or assemblages, and (2) an emphasis on materiality or more broadly the 'non-human' or 'more-than-human''¹⁹³.

¹⁹¹ Castro, *Geography of Hunger*, 13.

¹⁹² Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World*, 3.

¹⁹³ Simonsen, 'In Quest of a New Humanism', 20.

I do not intend to excavate all these debates, whether over Foucault and Hardt and Negri¹⁹⁴ new or vital materialisms¹⁹⁵, or over trans- and post-humanism¹⁹⁶. I do, however, want to emphasize the importance of specificity in either attacks on humanism, or attempts to somehow get beyond humanism. Noel Castree and Catherine Nash rightly observe that ‘the anti-humanistic embracing of posthumanism as an emergent or imminent historical condition also depends on the notion of the human as a once stable coherent category’¹⁹⁷. It depends, too, on humanism as a stable political philosophy or worldview, while it is in fact quite the contrary. Not all humanisms are equal, either politically, philosophically or geographically; not all humanisms necessarily come with the same European Enlightenment, anthropocentric and rationalist baggage¹⁹⁸. Neil Badmington’s critique of humanism’s ‘absolutist assumptions’ posits an ‘anthropocentric discourse’ that ‘relies upon a set of binary oppositions, such as human/inhuman, self/other, natural/cultural, inside/outside, subject/object, us/them, here/there, active/passive, and wild/tame’¹⁹⁹. If humanism really were all this it certainly would be worth ditching. But it is not; it is a much more complex set of historical narratives, philosophical positions and political theories. Indeed, beyond humanism’s many histories, as Braun pointed out in a response to Badmington, even those philosophers drawn on by self-declared posthumanists have explored how ‘the human [...] was ‘post’ from the beginning’²⁰⁰, rather than moving beyond some historical figure. As Jonathan Murdoch notes, Donna Haraway ‘[that] most prominent of posthumanist writers[,] makes clear the value of the humanist legacy’²⁰¹. I argue that for an anti-colonial geography, it is productive to explore this legacy through the radical anti-colonial movements that have made claims upon humanism²⁰², and through Castro’s own geographical humanism which shared a moment, and a political project, with them.

D. Space and the body

A geographical humanism requires attention to the question of space, and to the ‘geography’ in Castro’s ‘geography of hunger’. As I outlined in the first part of this chapter, Castro moves from an analysis of the body to an analysis of space, maintaining the profound connection between the internal workings

¹⁹⁴ Pithouse, “‘That the Tool’”, 112–14.

¹⁹⁵ Pithouse, 114–16.

¹⁹⁶ See Braidotti, *The Posthuman*.

¹⁹⁷ Nash, ‘Cultural Geography’, 501–2.

¹⁹⁸ Buttimer, ‘Geography, Humanism, and Global Concern’, 7.

¹⁹⁹ Badmington, ‘Mapping Posthumanism’, 1345.

²⁰⁰ Braun, ‘Modalities’, 1354.

²⁰¹ Murdoch, ‘Humanising Posthumanism’, 1357.

²⁰² Pithouse, “‘That the Tool’”, 107–8.

of the body and the expansive historical geographies of colonialism. This figures a scalar geometry of the human geographical subject²⁰³. The human metabolism is produced through its embeddedness in ecologies which materialize in it, and pass through it²⁰⁴, and metabolism articulates the spatial, temporal and ecological dynamics of survival in the body²⁰⁵. As Corinne Peluchon puts it, ‘not only is the subject embodied and dependent on natural and cultural things that nourish his or her life [...] the subject is also always relational’²⁰⁶. The body is not a fixed space but a result of multiple processes and scales that take on meaning in relation to one another. This is not to say that everything is scale²⁰⁷, but to emphasize that the body is key to conceptualising scale. It is key not as a fixed, ontological baseline for scalar thinking, but precisely as relational and metabolic.

Just as Castro turned the nutritional science and politics of his day into the geography of hunger, contemporary scholars have undertaken to establish the spatial, social and ecological politics immanent to new scientific understandings of hunger, public health, nutritional epigenetics and contemporary metabolic diseases²⁰⁸. Thinking of these as ‘metabolic geographies’ is to connect the oscillating, dialectical force of metabolism with the spatial politics of food, nutrition and hunger²⁰⁹. In dialogue with ongoing work in political ecology, thinking with Castro can help to shed light on the problem of how the human body is unequally produced in uneven environments. This re-opens the question of how the open and relational body is implicated in the production of scale. Nikolas Rose argued that biopolitics has shifted to the molecular life of genetics from the eugenic and systemic scale of 19th century science and early 20th century medicine²¹⁰. Yet the molecular, somatic and eugenic scales are fixed, but the metabolic is interactive. Hannah Landecker describes nutritional epigenetics as instigating a new ‘molecular understanding of the *environment* [which] answers a previous intense era of molecularization of the *body*, but is distinct from it because of the foregrounding of molecular inter-relation and critical timing rather than the search for answers in the structural enumeration of the molecules themselves’²¹¹. The metabolic scale of the body, in this conception of ‘new metabolism’, is both temporally sensitive and relational. Deploying a concept of metabolism emerging from critical nutritional thought is akin to approaches which embed the relational production of the body in the

²⁰³ Swyngedouw and Heynen, ‘Urban Political Ecology, Justice and the Politics of Scale’.

²⁰⁴ Swyngedouw, ‘Circulations and Metabolisms’; Gandy, ‘Cyborg Urbanization’.

²⁰⁵ Heynen, “‘But It’s Alright, Ma, It’s Life, and Life Only’”.

²⁰⁶ Pelluchon, ‘What Does It Mean to Replace Ecology with Mesology and Resources with Nourishment?’, 150.

²⁰⁷ See Brenner, ‘A Thousand Leaves’.

²⁰⁸ See for example Mansfield, ‘Health as a Nature—Society Question’; Guthman, ‘Doing Justice to Bodies?’; Hatch, *Blood Sugar*.

²⁰⁹ Davies, ‘Unwrapping the Oxo Cube: Josué de Castro and the Intellectual History of Metabolism’.

²¹⁰ Rose, ‘The Politics of Life Itself’.

²¹¹ Landecker, ‘Food as Exposure’, 170.

production of uneven environments and can, in Heynen's terms, 'bring the body back to life'²¹² in radical geography.

The sensory relationship with the environment can be at the root of a different ecological politics of scale to the extent that bodies are materially relational, open and unfinished²¹³. Landecker reminds us not to demote the metabolic, ontologically relational body to a silent assumption. Thinking with nutritional metabolism troubles the boundary between body and environment. The *human* metabolism demarcates the impossible boundary between nature and culture 'not at the surface of bodies, but deep inside them [...] in the space and time that is not quite the organism nor quite the environment, but the moving zone in which the two become one'²¹⁴. In terms of *humanism*, building from the discussion above, this is an expansive, ecological foundation. Susan Buck-Morss argues that the senses are the foundations of politics and aesthetics, but 'the nervous system is not contained within the body's limits. The circuit from sense-perception to motor response begins and ends in the world'²¹⁵. So too the human metabolism; through it the body and the environment are materially connected. Elaborating the relational way in which bodies and environments are metabolically produced is therefore a key concern for political ecology.

Nik Heynen argues that 'in order to keep the notion of politics of scale sharp, we must take several steps back and ground these politics, and all other politics, in the processes of social reproduction, material inequality, corporal survival, and naked life'²¹⁶. Castro's geography of hunger embeds the politics of scale in the body itself, and in particular in hunger. As explored above, hunger is at the base of a relational ontology of the body. This recalls the question of the sensory, as the mobile interface between body and world. But if hunger, as a metabolic relation, is a relation with the external, it is not as such a sensory relation. It is entirely experienced in bodies, apparently from the inside out, not the outside in. Unlike sensory experience, hunger is interoceptive²¹⁷. It derives from stimuli channelled between the gastrointestinal and genitourinary systems and the brain, and organized through the release of hormones. Hunger is felt, but not with senses. We might argue that interoception should also be considered, as Dawkins and Loftus put it for the senses, to be 'theoreticians of praxis'. They argue that 'against the anthropological humanism of Feuerbach, Marx argues for a relational understanding of the senses that is rooted in historically and geographically situated practices. Just as these practices (and

²¹² Heynen, 'Bringing the Body Back to Life through Radical Geography of Hunger'.

²¹³ See Orzeck, 'What Does Not Kill You'.

²¹⁴ Landecker, 'The Metabolism of Philosophy, In Three Parts', 224.

²¹⁵ Buck-Morss, 'Aesthetics and Anaesthetics', 12.

²¹⁶ Heynen, 'Revolutionary Cooks in the Hungry Ghetto: The Black Panther Party's Biopolitics of Scale from Below', 267.

²¹⁷ Craig, 'How Do You Feel?'

the relationships that define and are defined by such practices) change, so do the senses'²¹⁸. So does interoception. Bodies are historically and geographically situated, metabolism is mutable, and so is interoception. Indeed, Marx could be read as distinguishing between sensation and interoception in a passage quoted by Dawkins and Loftus: 'sense perception (see Feuerbach) must be the basis of all science. Only when science starts out from sense perception in the dual form of *sensuous consciousness* and *sensuous need* – i.e. only when science starts out from nature – is it real science'²¹⁹. This distinction of sense perception's 'dual form' underpins the material relationality of the body. That is, the world is part of human being not only through the senses, but through interoception and need. This allows us to think of bodily need not as part of a reductive idea of human sociality, but as intimately connected to broader dynamics of human being, of aesthetics, of sensuousness, consciousness and desire, all of which incorporate the world – the other, nature, society – into the self. We can return again to Enrique Dussel's philosophy of liberation:

'it is the materiality of the labourer's "corporeality" (his body, his basic needs, his sensibility – [...] a sensibility of need, *of hunger*) from which all that is economic emerges, from which all economic science must be thought. From such a real and sensible corporeality of living labour everything must be ethically judged'²²⁰.

It is along these lines that I understand Nik Heynen's 'really radical geography' premised on survival. In terms of political ecology, we might think of hunger as equivalent to environmental disease or toxicity: an internal production elicited by the body's absolute material entanglement with the world. It has, however, different spatialities and temporalities – immediate, diurnal – to the slow violence of toxicity. It also has more absolute resolution: while the cancers caused by toxins can often be treated, individual hunger – except in the most extreme of circumstances – can be effectively resolved immediately with the most basic of social and somatic interventions. It therefore opens the most glaring kind of schism between bodily survival and social processes. As a nutritionist, Castro was finely tuned to the biological specificities of social reproduction. By following not only food or calories, but vitamins, minerals and proteins, Castro allows us to tie a politics of social reproduction more intimately to the politics of agriculture, land, environmental justice and global trade. These ties are complex, and when Castro constructed the cartography of hunger in the Northeast of Brazil, there was a different, perhaps more immediate, set of relations between landscape, ecology and diet in culturally distinct regions. But that these ties are complex does not mean they are not there, and nor does it mean that the intellectual task has unrecognisably changed. This returns me to the question of Castro's regional geography, and its connections to his geography of hunger which I established in the first half of this

²¹⁸ Dawkins and Loftus, 'The Senses as Direct Theoreticians in Practice', 666.

²¹⁹ Karl Marx, *Early Writings*, 355.

²²⁰ Dussel, *Towards an Unknown Marx*, 203.

chapter. I will return to how we might deploy the notion of the region in different contexts in Chapter Five, below, but where Castro was able to tie regional agricultural production to forms of hunger, contemporary geographies of hunger might focus (as geographers already do) on urban space, logistics, metabolic diseases, malnutrition, modes of consumption, supermarket power, food banks, the spatial dynamics of struggles over food security and more.

The scalar geometry of the geography of hunger takes us inside the body because the politics of social reproduction do not stop at the skin²²¹. Turning to a geography of survival²²² has affinities to the idea of *resistance* coined by Carlos Walter Porto-Gonçalves and Milson Bettancourt Santiago²²³ and developed by Enrique Leff as a way of capturing the movements in defence of life (resistance and existence) that characterise Latin American political ecology²²⁴. This is not to promote a kind of biologism, but to insist that the body relies, necessarily, on practices of care and social reproduction²²⁵. The body's relational ontology is metabolic: a socio-natural process that extends from the cell to the global food supply chain. The body is produced in relation to uneven socio-ecologies, and to other bodies. Understanding the subject of humanism in these terms chimes with Gramscian approaches to political ecology and the 'person' which 'cannot be divorced from the natural world and [...] cannot be understood outside of specific socio-natural relations in particular places and particular times'²²⁶. For political ecology this proposes that 'the subjects of politicized environments are actively produced through their interactions with those environments'²²⁷. For Josué de Castro, these interactions with environments were, crucially, fed by the biological forcing ground of hunger. Through the geography – and later the geopolitics – of hunger, he insisted on the historical and geographical specificities of this central relationship between nature and society.

A key exemplar of his mode of thinking is the *homem-caranguejo*. The historically and geographically specific figure is an episode in Castro's analysis of 'certain elements of the biological mechanism of adjustment of the Brazilian man to the natural and cultural settings of the country'²²⁸. By thinking about the *homem-caranguejo* in metabolic terms we can see how it is consistent with Castro's broader geographical humanism of hunger. The hunger which crabbing both holds at bay and maintains – the broth is never a satisfactory meal – is directly connected to the loss of land which Castro theorized and

²²¹ Davies et al., 'The Body as Infrastructure'.

²²² Bunge, 'The Geography of Human Survival'; Heynen and Rhodes, 'Organizing for Survival'; Mitchell and Heynen, 'The Geography of Survival and the Right to the City'.

²²³ Porto-Gonçalves and Santiago, 'Encrucijada latinoamericana en Bolivia: el conflicto del TIPNIS y sus implicaciones civilizatorias [Latin American crossroads in Bolivia: the TIPNIS conflict and its civilizing implications]'.

²²⁴ Leff, 'Power-Knowledge Relations in the Field of Political Ecology', 234–35.

²²⁵ See for example the essays in Meehan and Stauss, *Precarious Worlds*.

²²⁶ Loftus, 'Gramsci, Nature, and the Philosophy of Praxis', 184.

²²⁷ Loftus, 'A Time for Gramsci', 95.

²²⁸ Castro, *Geografia Da Fome: O Dilema Brasileiro: Pão Ou Aço*, 31.

agitated against. The *homem-caranguejo* exists in the urban periphery as the product of a much more extensive geography – of hunger. For Castro this hunger is intimately bodily, but inseparably spatial, political and ecological: it is the defining relationship between man and nature. Through ingestion, nature becomes body and this relationship is also a key constituent of identity. In this relation food is more than a metaphor: the ‘miry milk’ of crab broth which people live on in the mangroves is constituted by and constitutive of people’s bodies, but also their social lives and cultural identities. There is something *unheimlich* about this anthropophagic crab broth: in Castro’s formulation the crabs are both foster brothers and dinner. But the entanglement of bodies and environments is always uncanny and uncomfortable. The *Geografia da Fome* develops an analytical framework in which food is an extraordinarily powerful signifier. Nature-society relations themselves are understood through an extensive analysis of the dietary practices of geographically and historically specific groups. The geography of hunger – and the *homem caranguejo* – are both analytical tools, and conditions to be resisted. The political, social and ecological forces of hunger press towards *dehumanization*²²⁹; the struggle *against* hunger, on the other hand, is humanizing.

Conclusion

The humanizing force of hunger returns us to the primacy of the practiced response to hunger: producing and providing food. What we might call metabolic politics – a politics of social reproduction – is premised on such practice. Alex Loftus proposes an environmentalism built on bodily praxis and everyday life, in which ‘the environment is something *lived* as a simultaneously bodily and global process. The environment is as much the toxins circulating through the bodies of people of colour as it is a better, more just world to be struggled for’²³⁰. Nik Heynen, similarly, has connected the metabolic body and political radicalism in his work on the Black Panther Breakfast club and radical anti-hunger politics²³¹. Castro’s way of thinking about nutrition helps clarify the stakes and histories of how bodies are connected, and the multiple scales through which socio-natures are crystallized in the human metabolism.

This chapter has cast Castro as a thinker of the body, what Adrienne Rich called, in 1984, the ‘geography closest in’²³². Rich developed this formulation, she says, ‘not to transcend this body, but to reclaim it’²³³. Rich’s phrase encapsulates the function of the body in Castro’s humanism. Using Rich’s

²²⁹ Preface by Josué de Castro in Montvalon, *Un milliard d’analphabètes le savoir et la culture* [A billion illiterates: knowledge and culture], 11.

²³⁰ Loftus, *Everyday Environmentalism*, x.

²³¹ Heynen, ‘Bending the Bars of Empire’.

²³² Rich, ‘Notes towards a Politics of Location’, 212.

²³³ Rich, 212–13.

radical feminist formulation we must recognize Castro's failure to articulate any kind of feminist politics at all. The *homem-caranguejo* is a *homem*. Haraway argues that 'humanity is a modernist figure; and this humanity has a generic face, a universal shape. Humanity's face has been the face of man'²³⁴. This remains true of Castro's version *homem-caranguejo*. However, many crab-pickers were, and are women²³⁵. As a hungry subject the *homem-caranguejo* is, like Haraway's, 'the figure of a broken and suffering humanity, signifying [...] a possible hope'²³⁶. 'From the start [...] in the midst of multiple translations and stagings'²³⁷, the *homem-caranguejo*, like Haraway's figure of suffering humanity, is 'a trickster figure [...] who might trouble our notions [...] of "the human," while making us remember why we cannot not want this problematic universal'²³⁸. We should pull Castro's gendered subject from his grasp – translate, update, sublate it – if we are to put it to use in a new space and time. It can be one of many 'eccentric subjects [who] can call us to account for our imagined humanity, whose parts are always articulated through translation'²³⁹.

The spatial and bodily interpretation of hunger which Castro puts at the centre of his thought is, like Rich's politics of locating the body, contoured by a struggle between the possessive 'I' and the communal 'we'²⁴⁰. Hunger is both 'mine' and 'ours'. Hunger – like pain – is felt deep in the body, but it is socially produced: it is in this sense both personal and communal. As Enrique Dussel put it, 'injustice is lived as pain'²⁴¹. Nelson Maldonado-Torres aims to 'decolonize being' through a focus on the trans-ontological: a concept drawn from Emmanuel Levinas of the fundamental openness of human reality, by which human ontology is determined by the capacity to give and receive²⁴². The 'coloniality of being' in this light is 'the obliteration of the trans-ontological'²⁴³, and decolonial justice is oriented by an insistence on the dimension of openness and excess intrinsic to the ontology of human being. These formulations give a philosophical tenor to a metabolic geography of the human²⁴⁴. Nevertheless, whether decolonial or anti-colonial, a humanist, metabolic politics seeks to act upon the relations between the hungry and the socio-spatial production of hunger. Such metabolic politics are less about food than about feeding. Heynen's analysis of the *Black Panther*'s breakfast club shows radical hunger

²³⁴ Haraway, 'Ecce Homo', 86.

²³⁵ Farfán-Santos, *Black Bodies, Black Rights*.

²³⁶ Haraway, 'Ecce Homo', 87.

²³⁷ Haraway, 89.

²³⁸ Haraway, 98.

²³⁹ Haraway, 98.

²⁴⁰ Eagleton, 'Adrienne Rich, Location and the Body'.

²⁴¹ Dussel, 'From Critical Theory to the Philosophy of Liberation: Some Themes for Dialogue', 29.

²⁴² Levinas is also key for Pelluchon and Smith, *Nourishment*, 155–60 in her analysis of hunger as a starting point for ethics.

²⁴³ Maldonado-Torres, 'On the Coloniality of Being', 259.

²⁴⁴ See also Pelluchon, 'What Does It Mean to Replace Ecology with Mesology and Resources with Nourishment?'

politics at work, nourishing bodies in communities and households²⁴⁵. The legacy of Castro in the work of Betinho and *Ação Cidadania* similarly mobilized the radical potential of hunger²⁴⁶. Eating ‘is never done alone’²⁴⁷, and nourishment is a process that is never at rest.

Castro’s anti-colonial bent emphasizes the particular colonial – as well as capitalist – spatiality of hunger, which persists today. As Dussel’s philosophy of liberation emphasizes the originary power of the call of the hungry,²⁴⁸ so Castro’s political practice sought to articulate that call and to respond to the demand that we take responsibility for the other’s hunger. He did so in a way that brought to light the expanded geographies through which hunger came into being. Seeing the continuities between calls for land reform, struggles for the minimum wage and free school meals brings to light the spatial politics Josué de Castro delineated. Castro’s work has long been superseded at the level of scientific knowledge of nutrition, the natural science of the body, and geographical conceptions of space. Yet the fundamental insights of the geography of hunger remain profoundly enlightening and profoundly animating. Enlightening because if we start from a critical geographical approach to the metabolism of the human body we can see that it is socially, ecologically and relationally produced. If we follow the sticky paths of blood and sugar, we can ask necessary questions about the ongoing functioning of capitalism and colonialism. The geography of hunger, and Castro’s radical humanism, are animating, for a simpler reason, though no less bloody: if hunger – *all* hunger – is socially and politically produced, it must be subject to social and political refusal. This remains a radical starting point for a truly embodied political ecology: a metabolic humanism.

²⁴⁵ Heynen, ‘Bending the Bars of Empire’, 410.

²⁴⁶ Vasconcelos, ‘Fome, Solidariedade e Ética’.

²⁴⁷ Hird, ‘Digesting Difference’, 233; See also Pelluchon, ‘What Does It Mean to Replace Ecology with Mesology and Resources with Nourishment?’, 151.

²⁴⁸ Dussel, ‘From Critical Theory to the Philosophy of Liberation: Some Themes for Dialogue’, 22.

Chapter Two: Recife, city of mangroves

no mangue o terreno não é de ninguém. É da maré

[In the mangrove, the land is no-one's, it is the tide's]¹

Josué de Castro

Por que então seus olhos / vinham pintados de azul / nos mapas?

[Why then are its eyes / painted blue / on the maps?]²

João Cabral do Melo Neto

Introduction

As a geographer, Josué de Castro's first love, and lifelong subject, was the city of Recife, capital of Pernambuco. Settled amid islands and mangrove forests at the mouths of the Capibaribe and Beberibe rivers, Recife, then Mauritsstad, was the centre of the Dutch colonial endeavour in Brazil between 1630 and 1654. As the Northeast's major port, Recife grew with the expansion of the sugar and cotton trades. In the 19th and 20th centuries, beset by droughts, the inland regions of the *sertão* (dry highlands), the wetter lowlands of the *agreste* and the coastal *zona da mata* (forest zone) became ever-larger sources of migration to Recife. Josué's parents moved there as a consequence of the seminal drought in the Northeast of 1877. Thanks to the plantation economy of the *latifúndia*, peasants and the rural proletariat were increasingly stripped of both land and the means to support themselves. The figure of the *retirante*, moving from the dry hinterland to the lush coastal zone became integral to the city's politics and imaginaries. Many attributed Recife's urban malaise to this migration. Gilberto Freyre – the influential luso-tropicalist sociologist from Recife – called Recife 'the swollen city'³. In the early 20th century Recife acquired a new port, tramways, railway lines and roads to serve the plantations. During the first half of the 20th century tens of thousands of people lived in precarious dwellings at water level. The national revolutionary moment of 1930 and the local abortive communist revolution of 1935 heightened

¹ Castro, Documentário Do Nordeste, 26.

² 'O cão sem plumas' [The dog without feathers] Neto, *Selected Poetry, 1937–1990*, 60.

³ Andrade, *Land and People*, 41; See also Melo and Freyre, *As Migrações para o Recife*.

tensions in Recife, and urban space became the subject and object of class and racial conflict. By the 1950s, Recife had a population of over 700,000⁴, and in the interstices of the colonial city and the export infrastructure an informal city had sprung up amid the mangroves⁵.

The inhabitants of the urban mangroves were the labourers – surplus population from the plantations, forced to migrate to the cities – upon whom the infrastructure of extraction, a crucial factor in the geography of hunger, functions. As Francisco de Oliveira later wrote, these migratory patterns were intimately bound up with the inter-regional dynamics of a capitalist system centred in the Centre-South of Brazil, and driven by imperialist- and neo-imperialist-associated industrial and export-oriented sections of the national bourgeoisie⁶. These new urban arrivals clustered around the infrastructural landscape built for the export industry⁷. There they became, and mingled with, dock-workers, factory workers and railway workers employed in the colonial economy⁸. These people were not external to the export economy but exploited by it⁹.

It was this city at this time that Josué de Castro grew up in, and that was the topos and topic of his urban geography. It was here that he first articulated the geography of hunger. He described Recife as ‘amphibious’ and, as we have seen, wrote of its inhabitants as *homem-caranguejos*: men-crabs. His urban writing is inseparable from his work on hunger: the metabolic processes of life linked the hungry body to urban landscapes and infrastructures and to historical geographies of colonialism and capitalism. The urban geography of hunger connects the historical and epistemic production of urban space and nature with the material histories of hunger, dispossession and everyday life. ‘Amphibious’ is also a political designation for the interaction of people, space and nature¹⁰. Many of Castro’s most important formulations of urban geography derive from the organicist metaphors of Vidal de la Blache.¹¹ In *Geografia da Fome* he aims ‘to precisely locate, delimit and correlate natural and cultural phenomena as they occur on the surface of the earth’¹². This corresponded to a basic extent with the regional geography project. However, the political force of his description – the subject of his geography – hunger – forced the geographical method beyond regionalism¹³.

⁴ Skidmore, *Politics in Brazil, 1930-1964*, 83.

⁵ For an overview of the changes in the 1930s see Lira, ‘Construção’.

⁶ Oliveira, *Elegia para uma Re(li)gião*, 118.

⁷ Cowell, ‘Cityward Migration’.

⁸ Fischer, ‘The Red Menace Reconsidered’.

⁹ Perlman, *The Myth of Marginality Urban Poverty and Politics in Rio de Janeiro*.

¹⁰ Melo Filho, ‘Swamps, Men and Crabs in Josué de Castro’.

¹¹ Archer, ‘Regions as Social Organisms’.

¹² Castro, *Geografia Da Fome: O Dilema Brasileiro: Pão Ou Aço*, 34–35.

¹³ Moraes, *Geografia: pequena história crítica*, 43–44.

The most fruitful way of reading Castro, though, is not to stop at his regionalism, or his Vidalianism or Sorreanist but to attend to the specificity of his thought. One way of doing this is to embed it in its specific historical and geographical moment. Castro began to write about urban Recife from the late 1920s, publishing columns on housing, poetry, book reviews and historical essays in the vibrant presses of Recife and Rio. Preceding and underpinning Castro's urban geography is his investigation of hunger. The survey done for *Condições* in the early 1930s covered the neighbourhoods of Torre, Encruzilhada and Santo Amaro¹⁴. Castro is not the only important radical Brazilian thinker to have worked in these communities. Dom Helder Câmara, the liberation theologian, became archbishop of Recife and worked in the mangroves, while Paulo Freire first developed his pedagogy of liberation in the same neighbourhoods¹⁵. The most formal and disciplinarily geographical of Castro's urban writings is *Fatores de Localização da Cidade do Recife: um Ensaio de Geografia Urbana* (Factors in the Location of the City of Recife: an Essay in Urban Geography) which was first published in 1948. Derived from his Doctoral Thesis, *Fatores*, like Castro's other urban work, remains unpublished in translation. (It was in fact translated, in the mid 2000s, but remains unpublished thanks to a dispute over rights¹⁶.) In *Fatores* Castro deploys key themes of regional geographical analysis. It was republished within *Ensaio de Geografia Humana*, a didactic book aimed at students which outlines the key issues and ideas of human geography at the time and is the most straightforwardly regionalist of Castro's works. Vasconcelos argues that Castro was inspired by French possibilism, English regional geography and human ecology but was also attentive to cultural history and environmental science¹⁷. Castro's, and other Brazilian geography's, relationship with the vidalian school has been well established and analysed¹⁸, including its later challenge by Marxist and critical geography in Brazil¹⁹. This influence fluctuated as Castro's thought developed from a dualistic vision of the economy, in the *Geografia da Fome*, to a more sophisticated approach in his later work on underdevelopment²⁰. He wrote in 1965, for instance, that he did not see Latin American society as dualist – capitalist and feudal – but as pluralist: a socio-economic structure of many intersecting forms²¹. But in his urban geography he went beyond the regionalist tradition, not least in his starting point of urban analysis. After his monograph on Recife he wrote a number of other important urban works: *Documentário do Nordeste* (1957) and his novel

¹⁴ Gonçalves, 'Para cada vítima'.

¹⁵ Kirkendall, 'Entering History'.

¹⁶ Sales and Pimentel, *João Cabral & Josué de Castro conversam sobre o Recife*, 77.

¹⁷ Vasconcelos, 'Josué de Castro and The Geography of Hunger in Brazil'.

¹⁸ Vieites and Freitas, 'A Influência de Maximilien Sorre e Vidal de La Blache'; Grimm, 'Trajetória Epistemológica de Milton Santos'.

¹⁹ Pedrosa, 'A Controvérsia Da Geografia Crítica No Brasil (Parte I)'; Pedrosa, 'A Controvérsia Da Geografia Crítica No Brasil (Parte II)'.

²⁰ Nascimento, 'O Resgate Da Obra de Josué de Castro'.

²¹ Castro, 'A La Recherche de l'Amérique Latine', 71.

Homens e Caranguejos (1967). I use the idea of amphibiousness as a way through his urban writing, and as a way of connecting it to contemporary geographical approaches to infrastructure and landscape.

While I do not, empirically, investigate other places in this chapter, I understand Recife as produced in relation to other places, and much wider historical geographies. This derives from Castro's own work, which is based in a broad comparative framework. I also put Castro's work in dialogue with Gillian Hart's approach to 'relational comparison' in order to think through landscape and infrastructural histories. Hart's relational comparison simultaneously resists euro-centric, imperialist understandings of a determining, pre-existing, world-historical capitalism while also insists on the ontological primacy of process. Relational comparison is highly conscious of scale, does not treat cases hermetically, and does not limit connection to observable exchanges. For Hart's open dialectic, process cannot be separated from case: 'what this conjunctural move entails is bringing key forces at play in [different locations] into the same frame of analysis neither as "cases" nor as variants of a universal process, but as connected yet distinctively different nodes in globally interconnected historical geographies – and also as sites in the production of global processes, rather than just recipients of them'²². Hart's form of relational comparison is specific and deliberate. It follows relations where they lead. While, as Jennifer Robinson insists²³, theorizing can *begin* anywhere, it cannot simply *go* anywhere. I begin from Recife in the 1930s. In Recife, amphibious life has been the necessary other to urban infrastructural modernity. But analysis does not stop at this relation, but pushes towards the inception of infrastructures at the other end of the Atlantic. This is to understand infrastructural landscapes in relation to one another, across the Black Atlantic, formed by the ebbs and flows of knowledges (both emancipatory and dominating), aesthetic practices (both artistic and technical), bodies (both free and enslaved), commodities (both bought and sold) and ships (both arriving and departing).

What is the relationship between amphibiousness, Recife, the *mangue*, the *homem-caranguejo*, and Castro's metabolic, anti-colonial geography of hunger? To answer this question, this chapter focusses on 1928 to 1954, when Castro was writing about Recife²⁴. Nevertheless, to understand this period it is necessary to go further back, and I will explore the colonial and neo-colonial periods. Thinking about Recife through its mangrove amphibiousness is to hold urban landscape, ecology and infrastructure in the same frame of reference. Where the rivers and mudflats meet the sea, extractive colonial capitalism has produced highly stratified forms of urban life. Along the 'rivers of sugar'²⁵ that flow into Recife, people have clustered around the infrastructural space of railways and roads and waterways. The port terminal marks the pinch-point where the Brazilian Northeast – the *agreste*, the *zona da mata*, the *sertão*

²² Hart, 'Relational Comparison Revisited', 1 June 2018, 373.

²³ Robinson, 'Thinking Cities through Elsewhere'.

²⁴ For a broad urban history of the period see Pandolfi, *Pernambuco de Agamenon Magalhães*.

²⁵ Andrade and Andrade, *Os Rios-do-açúcar*.

– meets the Atlantic economy²⁶. Recife's amphibious urban landscape is produced by infrastructure, and its landscape functions as infrastructure. Amphibious life is a condition of being in the water and on the land at the same time and of being inside and outside colonial modernity at the same time. Amphibious space is both a site of socio-ecological erasure and dispossession, a real and imagined commons, and a proving ground for resistance. Through placing Castro's work in Recife's historical political ecology, the chapter connects the development of Castro's urban writing with regional geography, the geography of hunger, and landscape, ecology and infrastructure. I do so by exploring the drastic socio-environmental transformations of the city in the first half of the twentieth century both through Castro's work and a variety of other archival sources. These questions fall across the 'analytical foci shared by critical landscape studies and political ecology', of 'contested property rights, struggles over meaning, land use change, and the cultural production of nature under capitalism'²⁷. It is this muddy terrain this chapter traverses.

A. Regional geography: Infrastructure, mangroves and the geography of hunger

In his monograph on Recife Castro wrote:

'Nature constructed the reefs along the coast, creating a natural port. Man raised the low lands lying behind the reefs and, with the artificial organism of his constructions, he created the city. Out of the association of these two geographical facts, out of the use of space as if it were plastic to be moulded, arose from the natural landscape this miracle of creation which harmonized the aesthetic and the functional, aspiration and contingency: *the city-port*'²⁸.

The mangrove trees create the soil the city sits on, as their roots fix earth where there was water. His analysis is spatial and ecological:

'between the city and the area of forest surrounding it, the mutual repercussions are so intense, that the two areas become complementary -- the city breathes through the country and the country through the city, with the indissoluble functionality of a single living organism'²⁹.

²⁶ Another story needs to be written about the continuities and discontinuities in Recife's urban space as the main port has moved south to an extra-urban zone at Suape, a project which has created vast environmental destruction.

²⁷ Neumann, 'Political Ecology III', 1.

²⁸ Castro, *A cidade do Recife*, 162–63.

²⁹ Castro, 54.

This is a regionalist formulation, in Kevin Archer's terms³⁰, but, again, he was not *merely* a regionalist. Like for Keith Buchanan, the radical anglophone geographer who drew on Castro's work, 'geography was not to be confined within the usual parameters of areal differentiation or mere regional description'³¹. The admixture of other influences and priorities, his intellectual and political commitments, and the site and subjects of his studies all mitigate against treating his work as merely another instance of an exhausted tradition.

The idea of the city-port brings together natural and social factors to produce a new analysis of urban life which we should understand through Castro's geography of hunger and his writing on the amphibious city. Amphibiousness describes the city's human, animal and vegetal life, emphasising the spatio-temporal flux between land and water. Castro wrote that 'in the mangrove, the land is no-one's. It is the tide's'³². This is a spatial, geographical conception which not only upsets the social relations of property, but also the distinction between the stuff of territory: terraqueous space is unassimilable to land or sea or river. As Hugh Raffles writes, in *In Amazonia*, 'we have been wading in *terra anfibia*, an amphibious world of mobile porosities where land and water become each other, and where humans and non-humans are made and unmade by those same sediments that bring histories and natures flooding into the immediacy of the now'³³. Recife's amphibiousness similarly binds space and time. The tide is the crucial figure, determining a rhythm of space and designating a broad place of contact and interaction: between the brackish and the fresh, between the economies of the land and the economies of the sea. Tidal space ebbs and flows, leaving behind changes, erasures, progressions and advances. Things – boats, crabs, sailors, trash, sugar – are brought in with the tide, and leave upon it. Castro's attention to the amphibious space of the urban mangrove, as the epicentre of his interpretation not only of urbanity, but of hunger, is an attention to a space that is both outside and inside colonial modernity.

Castro's urban geography is inseparable from the analysis of hunger explored in the previous chapter. David Nally shows how Michel Foucault identified a shift in the morphology of 17th and 18th century European cities, in which 'the spatial fabric of the town – the construction of quays, the partitioning of streets and the spacing of workshops – becomes ordered in such a way as to better manage the population in relation to "natural" and "artificial" occurrences.' This figures 'the city as a site of circulation, [and] forms the background to Foucault's longer discussion of scarcity [...] and the policing of grain.' The establishment of the sovereign as regulator applies in particular to the 'supply and

³⁰ Archer, 'Regions as Social Organisms'.

³¹ Watters, 'The Geographer as Radical Humanist', 3.

³² Castro, Documentário Do Nordeste, 26.

³³ Raffles, *In Amazonia*, 182.

provisioning of food'³⁴. Nally argues that power over urban food supply through infrastructure is central to Foucault's biopolitics. He develops this idea in relation to the metropole. Nally writes: 'if Foucault had considered colonial histories more systematically he would have seen that the security of the town – and the safety of the sovereign – were predicated on the steady commercialization of the agriculture in the colonial periphery as much as the centre'³⁵. The geography of hunger spans these sites. However, between these two poles – the plantation and the metropole – is another that Nally overlooks: the plantation metropole. The plantation metropole sits between the colonial plantation and the European metropole as an active spatiality, not a blank throughput. It is a crucial junction in the spatial history of food and hunger. It is linked to what Katherine McKittrick has called the 'plantation town,' the plantation's own forms of life and urbanity³⁶. Identifying the plantation metropole as a historical and geographical subject establishes how underdevelopment produces urban space. Recife is a functioning node in the geographical biopolitics of food that Nally identifies: its spatial fabric is part of the geography of hunger. In spite of its hunger, and the hunger of its hinterland, Recife was a site for the vast export of calories, predominately in the form of sugar. The hunger of the urban mangroves – the originary site of Castro's geography of hunger – is juxtaposed with, and produced in relation to, an infrastructure which exports food. The mangroves are an integral part of the rivers which enable the growth of the plantation economy and export agriculture, yet the people who live around them cannot access the wealth or food which flows along them. Castro understands the river's historical role serving as the determining infrastructure of the city: 'this air and this soil where the city of Recife lies, and from which the city takes all of its life and its physiognomy, are effects exclusively of the rivers that bathe it'³⁷. He pays close attention to how mangroves fix land in the watery landscape: they are mothers of soil, the rivers bring the earth of the *sertão* and meet the ocean currents and the winds to deposit soil in islets and inlets. Castro conceives of these natural processes as *labouring* to produce land.

Alongside, tangled up with, and ontologically and epistemologically inseparable from the rivers are the mangrove. According to Djalma de Melo Filho, Castro uses the *mangue* in at least four ways. Firstly as the ancestry of Recife, secondly as the factory of life and the model of ecological equilibrium, thirdly as a fount of knowledge and finally as the place of the socially excluded³⁸. This chapter argues that Castro also understands the mangrove as at the juncture of landscape and infrastructure. The mangrove is a kind of 'contact zone'³⁹; a space of many meetings, both ecologically and socially, and between

³⁴ Nally, 'The Biopolitics of Food Provisioning', 39.

³⁵ Nally, 43.

³⁶ McKittrick, 'Plantation Futures'.

³⁷ Castro, *A cidade do Recife*, 16.

³⁸ Melo Filho, 'Swamps, Men and Crabs in Josué de Castro'.

³⁹ Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*.

different economies: inland and city-port; Atlantic and plantation; marginal and elite. ‘The plants of the mangroves’, Castro wrote, ‘drowned in the brackish water of the tides, have to behave biologically like true shipwrecked sailors, saving, as far as possible, reserves of water so they do not die of thirst within the very water that surrounds them, but which cannot easily be used for their own metabolic needs’⁴⁰. The mangrove is an extraordinary plant: metabolic, amphibious, resilient and tenacious. The connections with the hungry migrants, and the figure of the *sertanejo*, is clear. This is not an innocent image, but one embedded in the political space of the mangroves. Castro includes plates of Dutch empire mangroves in Jakarta in his comparative, global analysis of Recife’s urban nature. The mangroves’ rhizomatic systems exist across vast spaces: floating scraps of mangrove root arrive on the Northeast Brazilian coast, carried on circum-Atlantic currents. Through these travelling roots the trees propagate themselves across the Caribbean, Brazil and the West Coast of Africa. They are part of the circulating ecological history of the Black Atlantic⁴¹. The mangrove has been used as a starting point by other anti-colonial thinkers and writers from Antonio Benítez-Rojo⁴² to Martin Carter⁴³, Aimé Césaire⁴⁴, Maryse Condé⁴⁵ and Derek Walcott⁴⁶. The mangrove provides many of defining metaphors and modes of thought about the city and can also help us conceptualize the networked global ecology of empire.

From Castro’s earliest work the mangrove’s living landscape is intimately linked with hunger. *Condições de Vida da Class Operária* showed that the people of Recife struggled to make their surroundings supply their metabolic needs. His mother – who had separated from his father, in what appears to have been a traumatic aspect of Castro’s childhood – lived in a poor neighbourhood and taught workers’ children from her home⁴⁷. Castro figures urban ecological space as a site of resistance. In the 1920s he wrote of ‘the cycle of the crab’: people caught crabs for survival, crabs lived off the detritus of the people. The diet of crabs left people malnourished, surviving in a multi-species cycle of poverty marked by the struggle to subsist. Catching crabs is a mechanism of survival, but it is also a modality of identity and defiance. Categories blur: ‘humans fashioned of crab meat, thinking and feeling like crabs; amphibians, at home on land and in water, half-man, half-animal [...] humans who began life as foster brothers to the crab’⁴⁸. As Maria Aparecida Lopes Nogueira argues, the *homem-caranguejo*

⁴⁰ Castro, *A cidade do Recife*, 39.

⁴¹ See Carney, *Black Rice*.

⁴² Benítez-Rojo, ‘Sugar and the Environment in Cuba’; Benítez-Rojo, *A View from the Mangrove*.

⁴³ Carter, *University of Hunger*.

⁴⁴ Césaire, *Cahier*.

⁴⁵ Condé, *Crossing the Mangrove*.

⁴⁶ Walcott, *The Poetry of Derek Walcott 1948–2013*.

⁴⁷ García, ‘Biografia Intelectual’, 36.

⁴⁸ Castro, *Of Men and Crabs* p.xii.

is a figure that seems to overcome nature-culture and human-environment binaries⁴⁹. If the ‘goal’ of ‘urban political ecology [...] should first be to understand the socionatural conditions that produce urban hunger, and then to act to end these contradictions’⁵⁰, then in Castro’s earliest work, in the cycle of the crab we find an urban political ecologist at work. The amphibiousness of landscape and aesthetics is inseparable from the cycle of the crab. In *Of Men and Crabs* amphibiousness is explicitly tied to political resistance. The child hero, João Paulo, dies in an abortive revolution, modelled closely on Recife’s 1935 communist-inspired uprising and launched from the mangrove. The last lines connect revolution to landscape, bodies to ecology: ‘The landscape of the marshes was now covered by a veil of darkness, a black shroud that extended over all the bodies of the defeated revolutionists. Somewhere among them, buried under the mangroves, lay the body of João Paulo, whose flesh in decay would nourish the mud, which, in turn, feeds the cycle of the crab’⁵¹.

It was not, though, only a landscape of death. Castro also described, in his short stories and journalism of the 1930s, the bubbling social and cultural lives of people among the mangroves⁵², ‘the society of the crabs [...] in the marshlands of the city of Recife, where I lived among those shipwrecked in this sea of misery’⁵³. The mangrove, as vegetal, animal and social space and as a sea of shipwrecks is an image redolent with the historical geographies of colonialism. It is this that the musician Chico Science insisted upon, too. He drew upon Castro through connecting him with Afro-Brazilian and indigenous political identity both via musical form, and through the symbolism of Recife’s *mangue beat* movement itself: Chico Science’s band was called *Nação Zumbi* (The Nation of Zumbi) after the Afro-Brazilian leader of the most important escaped slave community in Brazil, the 17th century *quilombo* of Palmares. What, then, is at stake in seeing this conception of the mangrove as connected to histories of Black Atlantic thinking about ecology, landscape, space and history? If, in Derek Walcott’s resonant phrase, ‘the sea is history’, what is the mangrove?

Austin Zeiderman has recently used the figure of ‘submergence’, to ‘illuminate precarious forms of political life’ in Buenaventura, Colombia. ‘The intertidal zone — the land adjacent to the sea that is periodically submerged — has endured repeated acts of violence and dispossession, which have displaced thousands from their homes, and everyday life there is highly precarious’⁵⁴. Similar processes of violence and dispossession mark the historical geographies of Recife’s urban mangroves. In the mangrove the oceanic and litoral geography of the tide is inseparable from its historical, cultural and social form. Using Castro’s urban geography as a starting point, I address the amphibious history of

⁴⁹ Nogueira, ‘Utopias’.

⁵⁰ Heynen, ‘Justice of Eating’, 126.

⁵¹ Castro, *Of Men and Crabs*, 190.

⁵² Castro, Documentário Do Nordeste, 46–48.

⁵³ Castro, *Of Men and Crabs* p.xi.

⁵⁴ Zeiderman, ‘Submergence’, 811.

representations of the city under colonial modernity, plotted by the slippages between painting and map. This brings into view the entangled, spatially extended and relational history of landscape and infrastructure. Finally, I turn to the silty, muddy roots of mangrove space itself. Here I show how amphibiousness was the target of Recife's socio-environmental transformation in the first half of the twentieth century, in particular through the process of *aterramento*: making land.

B. Amphibious Landscape

In this section I historicize not only Castro's own conceptual framework of landscape, but the history of the landscape concept itself, from the banks of the Capibaribe in Recife. As a mode of thought, landscape came before geography for Josué de Castro. As a child, Castro sat and watched the Capibaribe:

‘the river whispered to me in its sweet language as it timorously passed through the green-gray backlands: voluminous when it flowed through the sea of the unending cane plantations, and peaceful through the miry sea of marshes, till it fell into the bosom of the sea itself. For hours I would sit motionless at the quay, listening to the story of the river, watching its waters flow as if it were a motion picture. It was the river that first taught me the history of the northeast, the history of this land that almost lacks a history’⁵⁵.

Castro's intimacy with the landscape recasts the prophecy of the famous millenarian *sertanejo* religious leader, Antônio Conselheiro, immortalized in part by Euclides da Cunha and an important influence on Castro, who declared that ‘the backlands will become the sea and the sea will become the backlands’⁵⁶. In Castro's hands the sea of the cane plantations takes on different, trans-Atlantic, socio-economic connotations from Conselheiro's religious messianism.

In his early twenties, Castro wrote a series of reports from Mexico in 1930. The Mexican revolution's history was ‘like a bloodstain on that enchanted landscape. The testimony of the crime of this lascivious tropical landscape that sucked the blood of its heroes. The earth that seemed full of a strange pleasure, its meaty vegetation clinging to the sides of gullies’⁵⁷. Castro's biography – what he would himself later theorize as the local contours of what I call his regional political ecology (see Chapter Four) – colours what he sees: literally the ‘vegetation with fleshy leaves’ (*vegetação de folhas carnosas*) is reminiscent of his later descriptions of the mangroves of Recife. More importantly, though, we can see here that landscape functions not as a transparent geographical signifier, but as a set of visual signs to

⁵⁵ Castro, *Of Men and Crabs*, xviii.

⁵⁶ Cunha, *Rebellion in the Backlands*, 135.

⁵⁷ Castro, ‘A Revolução Mexicana’.

be read⁵⁸. In his next dispatch from Mexico he was more didactic: ‘the best history is that which is written on the face of the earth [...] in the soul of a people. In the physiognomy of its cities’⁵⁹. As Claudio Minca argues, in French regional geography, landscape was the visible expression of the *genre de vie*, the ‘mode of life’: ‘a reflection free of ambiguities or shadows; an expression of the cartographic “truth” of the territory, a truth without (and beyond) theory’⁶⁰. Castro works through, but exceeds, this approach in the political insistence with which he reads the Mexican and Northeastern landscapes. For him, landscape is more than an objective reality, it is associated with place and identity, with memory, pedagogy and epistemology. The rivers are a way of knowing the world and of being in it. His position in this landscape is intimate: ‘the house where I was born had next to it a large fishpond with fish, crabs, and other similar crustaceans. If I was not born inside the fishpond with the crabs, at two I was already in it’⁶¹. For Castro, ‘landscape’ (in Rose and Wylie’s words) is also concerned with ‘the materialities and sensibilities with which we see [...] [It] names a perception-with, the creative tension of self and world’⁶². In Castro’s relationship with Recife’s mudscapes, we find this kind of distribution of ‘subject and objects, selves and worlds’⁶³.

Placing Castro’s use of landscape within the epistemic history of the landscape mode of thought, Tariq Jazeel’s caution is necessary: ‘if we are not attentive to the ways that theory must translate, mutate, and yield as it travels [...] then we risk silencing the characteristics and politics’ of particular landscapes. Applying the Euro-American analytical gaze ‘we risk producing a dissimulated landscape’⁶⁴. However, as I will go on to argue, Castro’s use of landscape reinforces less the ‘untranslatability’ that Jazeel emphasizes, than how Euro-North American landscape concepts were produced out of a colonial modern gaze which was translational and transatlantic in inception. That is, the story of Recife’s landscape history itself is one of relations, negotiations and interconnections with European landscapes: a story of translations.

The term landscape itself emerged in relation to Dutch *landschap* paintings of the early 17th century⁶⁵. At that time the Dutch were colonising the Northeast of Brazil and leaving an aesthetic and material legacy that lasts until today⁶⁶. Portuguese colonialism replicated hilly port cities across the Atlantic and Indian Ocean world from Salvador to Goa. Dutch urban colonialism, meanwhile, as Castro noted,

⁵⁸ Minca, ‘The Cultural Geographies of Landscape’.

⁵⁹ Castro, ‘Motivos Mexicanos’.

⁶⁰ Minca, ‘Humboldt’s Compromise, or the Forgotten Geographies of Landscape’, 189.

⁶¹ Castro, *Of Men and Crabs*, xvi.

⁶² Rose and Wylie, *Animating Landscape*, 478.

⁶³ Wylie in Merriman et al., ‘Landscape, Mobility, Practice’, 203.

⁶⁴ Jazeel, ‘Dissimulated Landscapes’, 64.

⁶⁵ Cosgrove, ‘Landscape and Landschaft’.

⁶⁶ Castilho, ‘Água e Espaço’, 600–601.

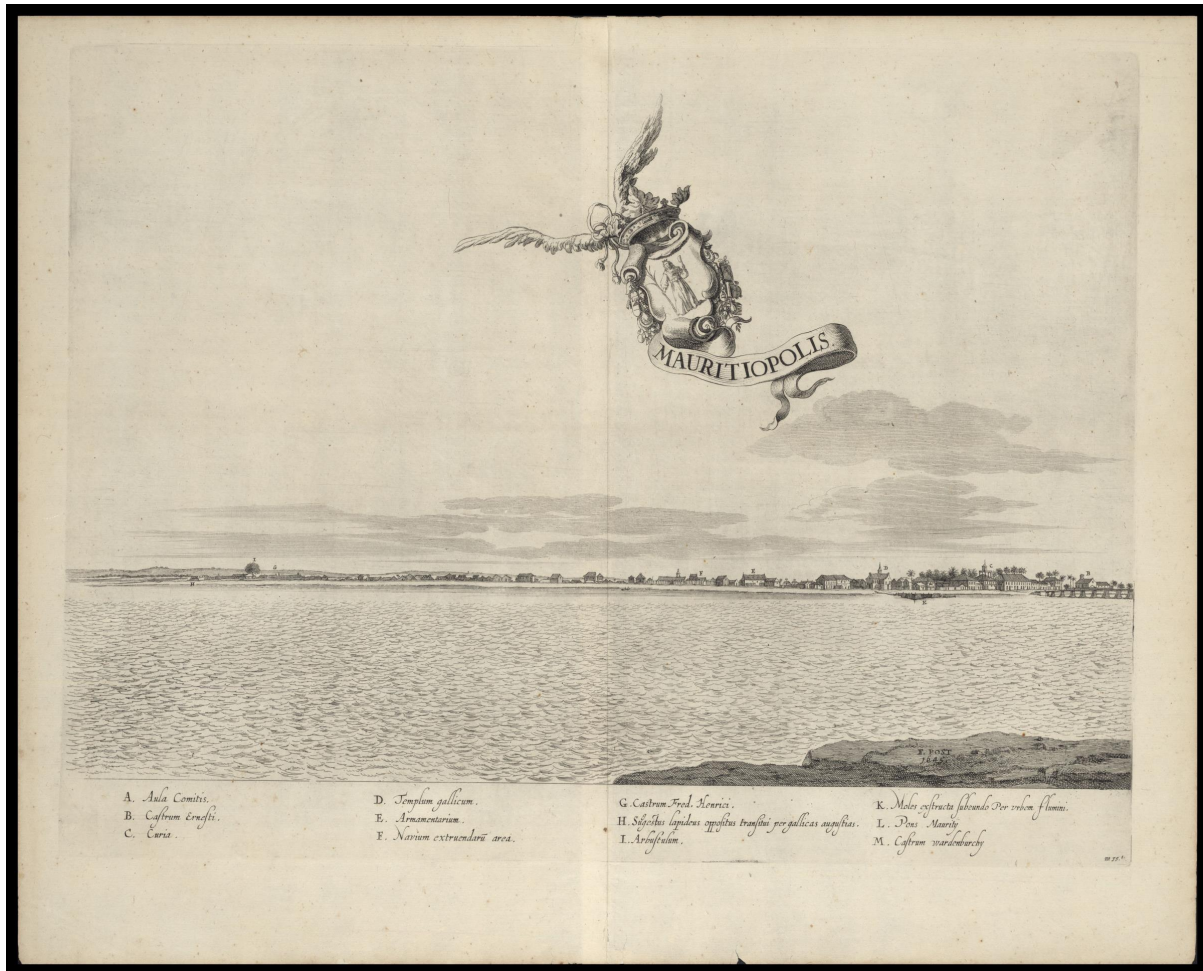


Figure 6: Frans Post: Left hand portion of a view of Mauritstaad and Recife. 'Mauritiopolis' (1647). Source: Wikipedia Commons

exported its own landscapes and urban forms through land reclamation technologies from Amsterdam to Batavia and Recife, and back again. Indeed, Castro lifts the term 'amphibious' from a description, by Ramalho Ortigão, of Holland as an 'amphibious region'⁶⁷. In researching Recife's regional geography and historical landscape, Castro himself travelled to Amsterdam and Portugal⁶⁸. The metropolitan region of Recife is one of few places where these two historical urban colonial landscapes exist alongside one another; Portuguese Olinda and Dutch Recife. The Dutch period was brief (1630-1654), but has an outsized importance in histories of Northeastern, and indeed Brazilian, identity⁶⁹. The influence of Dutch urban administrators on the cultural landscape, European-focussed elites and urban history of Recife was profound.

Thanks to this period, Recife has a place in the history of Dutch landscape painting. An influential early Dutch landscape painter, Frans Post, was employed by the governor Johan Maurits to produce a series

⁶⁷ Castro, *Ensaio de Geografia Humana*, 235.

⁶⁸ Castro, 197.

⁶⁹ Arêas, 'Apresentação: A Noiva Do Desastre', 9; Albuquerque Jr, *The Invention of the Brazilian Northeast*, 44.

of Pernambucan landscapes, capturing the early history of the sugar economy and the new city of Mauritsstad: Recife. As Rebecca Parker Brienien argues, these paintings probably hung in Maurits' newly built palace in Recife as a figure of the recently conquered territory⁷⁰. The paintings and etchings clearly manifest a topographical aesthetic (Figure 6)⁷¹. Part of a long tradition of visualizing the exotic within colonial enterprises, the landscapes hung alongside anthropological depictions of the population of the Northeast. Post established water as the defining feature of the urban landscape. As familiarity and nostalgia informed the modalities of Dutch colonial urbanism, so water determined its landscape aesthetics. The point of perspective in the pictures is crucial: the city is a waterscape. Their symbolic function of is to reenforce possession: the tradition of landscape painting was adjunct to the depiction and description of territories under control⁷², as that which was represented was the *landschaft* or county claimed by the gaze of the state⁷³. *Landschaft* – as Ansi Paasi points out – also has connotations of 'region' and 'space', re-emphasising the political qualities of these landscape paintings⁷⁴. Post's Pernambucan paintings served (pun intended) to shore up colonial claims to space. *Water-territory* is the subject, and the terraqueous is the point of perspective: the colonial gaze is amphibious. In this sense the foreground of the painting recalls the preface of Castro's novel, and Chico Science's music videos: but here it is Frans Post's feet in the mud.

After the Dutch lost their toehold in Brazil to the Portuguese, and Post returned to the Netherlands, his Brazilian work burnished his reputation in Europe. His American experience helped him establish himself with the Dutch aristocracy as his landscapes were folded into the transactional world of European aristocracy. His patron, Maurits, used Post's paintings to endear himself with his own patron, Frederik William, elector of Brandenburg. Post's work was also influential on the tradition itself: just as early landscape painting affected ideologies of nature in urban Recife, so Recife's nature and landscape affected European representational practices⁷⁵. The Dutch colonial endeavour was part of the development of landscape painting itself⁷⁶. As Mignolo puts it, 'the conquest and colonization of the New World became the blueprint for European organization of space'⁷⁷. As the next section will argue, the aesthetics and politics of cartographies and landscape alike speak to this dialectical relationship.

⁷⁰ Brienien, 'Albert Eckhout and Frans Post'.

⁷¹ Driver and Martins, 'View and Visions of the Tropical World', 4–7.

⁷² Oliver, 'Frans Post's Brazil', 198–200.

⁷³ Cosgrove, 'Landscape and Landschaft'; See also Olwig, 'Landscape, Culture and Regional Studies'.

⁷⁴ Paasi, 'From Region to Space', 163–67.

⁷⁵ Schmidt, 'The "Dutch""Atlantic" and the Dubious Case of Frans Post'.

⁷⁶ Larsen, 'Descartes and the Rise of Naturalistic Landscape Painting in 17th Century Holland'.

⁷⁷ Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs*, xiii.

C. Cartography and Infrastructure

To explore this reciprocity further, I want to turn from landscape to maps, surveys and infrastructural planning. This is not a great leap. Cosgrove's analysis of the landscape way of seeing argues that landscape and cartography were interdependent and co-emergent aesthetic fields⁷⁸. Historically, the boundary between the map and the painting were muddy. Both are imbued with aesthetics in their production and affect, in the 'aesthetic criteria', through which 'the environment' is known⁷⁹. Rancière defines aesthetics as the 'delimitation of spaces and times, of the visible and the invisible, of speech and noise that simultaneously determines the place and the stakes of politics as a form of experience. Politics revolves around what is seen and what can be said about it, around who has the ability to see and the talent to speak, around the properties of spaces and the possibilities of time'⁸⁰. As aesthetic in this sense, landscapes and cartographies produce what is seen and who can see it; they aesthetically delimit space and time, the visible and the invisible. Recife's landscape, and how it was seen, has roots in the Dutch colonial period, and materially altered the growth of the city. Castro draws this out in his historical comparison of Recife with cities of the Dutch empire. The plates in *A Cidade* include pictures of Amsterdam, Batavia (now Jakarta) and New Amsterdam (New York). Castro stresses Recife's kinship with urban forms across the post-imperial world. He also reprints old maps and plans.

The history of landscape, landscape paintings and mapping are connected in aesthetic and material ways. These connections take us to infrastructure, and the dialectical relationship between landscapes, infrastructures and environmental transformation. Post's paintings of Brazil are also representations of infrastructures – rivers, plantations, ports and roads. Like maps, the paintings were instruments of discursive power that constituted substantive pre-conditions for the incorporation of Recife into global extractive economies. 'The combination of landscape with infrastructure,' Matthew Gandy writes, 'necessarily brings questions of aesthetics and cultural representation into our analytical frame and immediately unsettles a narrowly social scientific approach to the study of cities'⁸¹. Landscapes and infrastructures in Recife were produced in relation to one another: the river and the port are intimately connected. Inspired by Castro's attention to the extended geographies of hunger, we can see how material and discursive forms of colonialism produced these landscapes as part of global geographies of extractivism. This returns me to David Nally, and his discussion of how the spatial fabric of urbanity was connected to the biopolitics of food provisioning. As two city-ports – plantation-metropole and metropole – the landscapes of Recife and London were produced in relation to one another. Each look as they look – function as they function, metabolize as they metabolize – because of the connections between them. Here, to avoid writing 'dissimulated' landscapes, as Jazeel warns, is to move beyond

⁷⁸ Cosgrove, 'Prospect'.

⁷⁹ Ghertner, *Rule by Aesthetics*, 159.

⁸⁰ Rancière, 'The Distribution of the Sensible', 13.

⁸¹ Gandy, 'Landscape and Infrastructure in the Late-Modern Metropolis', 63.

both hermetically distinct epistemic histories of landscape (of seeing, and of the seen), but also beyond hermetically distinct material histories of landscapes.

Andrew Sluyter's *Colonialism and Landscape* sought to articulate how colonial logics produce landscapes, and how the symbolic and material landscape transformations of colonialism continue to effect postcolonial land use⁸². Sluyter's focus is on conservation, development, and rural landscape change. However, the intersections between infrastructures of colonial extraction and urban landscape change remains an important area of enquiry. Infrastructure has long been understood to be a key force in urban transformation and morphology, as well as the means for the projection and extension of power⁸³. In the case of Recife these are associated not only with Dutch and Portuguese settler colonialism, but with continuing structures of neo-colonial and capitalist-imperialist power.

Connecting Castro's urban geography with his geography of hunger proposes focusing on Recife's place in an Atlantic system of unequal exchange. This connects Recife to other cities, from the proximate (Salvador), to the parallel (Port-au-Prince). Yet to attempt to understand conjuncturally the historical geographies of landscape and infrastructure in Recife in the first half of the twentieth century, I turn to its insistent connections with another city: London. The determining connection between landscape and infrastructure in Recife in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was that produced in the uneasy, extractive alliance between British capital and Brazilian plantation elites. By the early 20th century London-based capital was critical to the Brazilian and the Northeastern economy⁸⁴. The global financing of plantation economies are central to the geography of hunger for a dual reason: the expansion of export infrastructure, and the restriction of internal investment. Mike Davis, in his global work on famine – 'wars over the right to existence'⁸⁵ – argues that 'British control over Brazil's foreign debt and thus its fiscal capacity [...] helps explain the failure of either the [Brazilian] empire or its successor republic to launch any anti-drought development effort in the *sertão*'⁸⁶. 'The flow of British capital to Brazil,' meanwhile, 'was closely linked with the development of the export infrastructure' of roads, railways and ports⁸⁷. Recife's railways in particular were funded by British capital⁸⁸, and its port infrastructure was also bound up with British interests⁸⁹. London financiers had been key, also, to attempts to modernize the Northeastern sugar industry in the late 19th

⁸² Sluyter, *Colonialism and Landscape*.

⁸³ See for example Easterling, *Extrastatecraft*; Graham and Marvin, *Splintering Urbanism*; Cowen, *The Deadly Life of Logistics*.

⁸⁴ Arraes, *Brazil: The People and the Power*, 22–23.

⁸⁵ Davis, 'The Political Ecology of Famine', 51.

⁸⁶ Davis, 60.

⁸⁷ Abreu, 'British Business in Brazil', 390.

⁸⁸ Richard Graham, *Britain and the Onset of Modernization in Brazil 1850-1914*, 4 (CUP Archive, 1968).

⁸⁹ See also Freyre, *The English in Brazil*; Perruci, *A República Das Usinas*.

century, through changes not only in the processing and ownership structure of plantations, but in export infrastructure itself. British investment in Brazil peaked around 1930 before declining in the 1950s, to be replaced in large part by the still-imperialist interests of North American capital. In the main period of Castro's work on Recife, 1930-54, British capital was on the wane, but still fundamental. Social and political life in Recife was still intimately connected with British investment and control, from the tramways to the sugar mills and railways. While Graham notes that the impact of British capital in sugar was less dramatic than in other sectors (notably coffee), infrastructure was critical to the expansion of the extractive agricultural economy⁹⁰ which is the *sine qua non* of Castro's geography.



Figure 7: Planta da Cidade do Recife, Sir Douglas Fox, 1906. (detail): Source: labtopope.com.br

This recalls some of the central tenets of Ruy Mauro Marini's dependency theory, articulated some twenty years after Castro. He wrote that 'the development of the principal export sector tends, in these countries, to be underpinned by foreign capital through direct investments, leaving to the national dominant classes the control of secondary activities of export and of the exploitation of the internal market'⁹¹. Castro does not plough the same ideological furrow as Marini, but his analytics of urban hunger are nevertheless underpinned by a similar argument to Marini's, which places the alliance between the national elite and international capital at the core of a form of (in Marini's terms) super-exploitation, or at the crux of a geography of hunger (in Castro's).

⁹⁰ Forman, *The Brazilian Peasantry*.

⁹¹ Marini, *Subdesarrollo y Revolución*, 6 (my translation).

The export infrastructure of Recife's port was built on the back of engineers' surveys of the shallow waters and fluctuating streams of the Capibaribe and Beberibe rivers; surveys with deep associations with British capital, the rule of experts and colonial forms of knowledge. Often commissioned by the municipal government, these maps were nevertheless tools for the insertion of capital into export infrastructure, and the insertion of the Northeast into global flows of commodity extraction.

In 1906 a British civil engineer and surveyor, Charles Douglas Fox, produced a map of Recife for the State government (Figure 7). This map brings the imperial and extractive skeletons out of the cupboard of cartographic knowledge. Fox, educated at King's College London, was a significant figure in imperial British civil engineering. He was president of the Institution of Civil Engineers 1899-1900 and drove British involvement in building South American railways. Such expert-led imperialism is a common trope, but the scholarship that exists on Fox does not discuss the mapping of Recife. A number of British surveyors were involved over a period of years⁹². The Fox map, along with a later map drawn up by the municipality in 1932⁹³, was influential, underwriting later cartographies and engineering projects for drainage and water supply⁹⁴. Douglas Fox and Partners also worked on programmes for the draining and water supply of the city⁹⁵. In general terms, European experts influenced Brazilian urbanism, specifically in Recife but also Rio and elsewhere, in the early 20th century⁹⁶. Fox's surveys facilitated the work of Saturnino Brito (1864-1929), the engineer who laid out Recife's first sanitation systems⁹⁷. Fox's was not the first British map of Recife: civil engineers Henry Law and John Blout had made one in 1856. The Law and Blout map was drawn up to make propositions for draining and canal works in and around the port (Figure 8). The two maps are closely connected. The 1906 map was co-authored by Henry Michell Whitley and, as records from the East Sussex Records Office show, Henry Law & Sons (of the 1856 map), worked for Whitley on his estate in East Sussex in 1896⁹⁸. There they drafted plans to address flooding and drainage, just as Henry Law had in Recife. As with Post's

⁹² *Diario de Pernambuco*, 30th December 1905, 12th January 1906, 10th February 1906, 8th December 1906, 26th July 1907

⁹³ Barreto, *O Recife através dos tempos*.

⁹⁴ Melo, *Metropolização e subdesenvolvimento*, 67–69; Vasconcelos and Sá, 'A Cartografia Histórica Da Região Metropolitana Do Recife', 13–14.

⁹⁵ Freyre, *Guia Prático*, 10.

⁹⁶ There is a lot of work on hygienism in this period. See for example Lopes, *A Cruzada Modernizante e Os Infiéis No Recife, 1922-26*; Bertoni, 'Saturnino de Brito'; Nascimento and Bautista, 'Dinâmica Da Habitação Popular e Do "Interesse Social" No Recife'; Meade, '*Civilizing*' Rio; Chalhoub, *Cidade febril*; Lima, 'A Pobreza Como Um Problema Social'.

⁹⁷ Brito's two volume work on Recife's drainage was published in 1943 as volumes 8 and 9 of his complete works: Brito, 'Obras'.

⁹⁸ East Sussex Records Office: GIL/3/9/167/8, GIL/3/9/167/17, GIL/3/9/167/55

paintings from two centuries before, watery knowledge ebbed and flowed between the amphibious spaces of Recife and Europe. Henry Law brought back expertise on flood management from Brazil – and Brazilians – which were then applied to flooding in Sussex, from where Whitley’s company returned to map the space of Recife fifty years later.

Between Law and Whitley, in 1873, John Hawkshaw conducted yet another British-led survey of Recife. Hawkshaw was an even more influential engineer than the others. While in Brazil in the 1870s he surveyed a number of ports, not just Recife, and was received by the Emperor Dom Pedro II. Hawkshaw even donated a prize to the Brazilian Polytechnic Institute, seeking to reward engineering research⁹⁹. In 1873, as well as completing the map of Recife, Hawkshaw was appointed the chief engineer on the Severn Tunnel, one of the major engineering projects of the Victorian period. The tunnel was the work of the Great Western Railway (GWR) who that same year, 1873, also began expanding

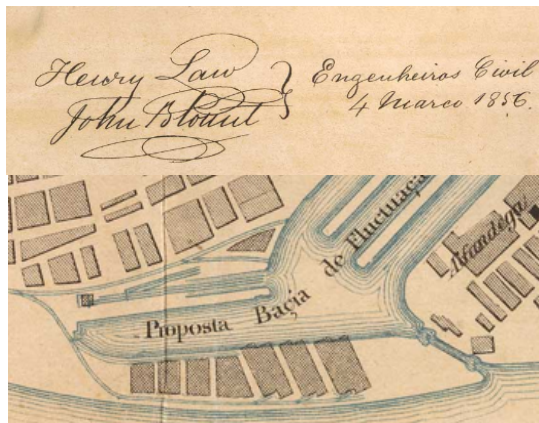


Figure 8: Details from Henry Law and John Blout map 1856. Source: Biblioteca Nacional de Brasil (digital archive)

in the Northeast of Brazil with the establishment of the Recife-Limoeiro line ¹⁰⁰. In terms of export infrastructure, Great Western Railways was a crucial actor in the Northeast. These engineers’ biographies themselves demonstrate the deep transatlantic continuities of sugar infrastructure: as well as building the railways of Pernambuco and mapping its port, Hawkshaw engineered the East and West India Docks in London where Pernambucan sugar landed ¹⁰¹. Cartographic, landscape and infrastructural history demonstrate the relational geographies of imperial and neo-imperial space, linked by epistemological and

ontological, concrete and abstract flows.

The silt of imperialist forms of knowledge is embedded in the seams of Recife’s transformation into a modern city. Yet such knowledge was incomplete, partial and amphibious. Figure 7 shows the central areas of Recife in Fox’s map. The port is at the bottom centre, where train lines arriving from the sugar zones terminate. Alongside, and connected to the railways, the rivers were integral to the development of the economic, social and political geography of the Brazilian Northeast. But the ecology of the city challenged the surveyors’ categories and evaded representation. Figure 9 shows the same site in 1856, 1906 and 1932. It shows how space and cartography developed, from uncertain dwelling amid uncertain land to apparently dry land and the straight lines of modernist urban space. But the details of the maps

⁹⁹ Beaumont, Sir John Hawkshaw.

¹⁰⁰ Gaspar, ‘Great Western’.

¹⁰¹ Chrimes, ‘Hawkshaw, Sir John (1811–1891)’; See also Chrimes, ‘Civil Engineers’; Chrimes, ‘Lost in Space?’

play out the struggle for representation of the amphibious land-waterscape: islands don't have edges, lines of land surround blue water and lines of water cut into the land, an area, apparently of land, is marked by '*lama*' – mud (Figure 10). There is a fundamental ambivalence between land and water which the surveyors' modernist, Cartesian notions of space try and fail to resolve. An amphibious sensibility needs the vector of time (tides, sedimentation, river currents) and 'accurate' cartographic representation is elusive. As the Recifense poet and friend of Castro's, João Cabral de Melo Neto, wrote of the mangrove-lined river Capibaribe, 'why then are its eyes / painted blue / on the maps?'¹⁰² The aesthetics of landscape here are at once history and ecology. But neo-imperial, Cartesian cartography struggles precisely because, (as Hugh Raffles writes of the *terra anfibia* of the Amazon) 'it makes no sense [...] oppos[e] water to landscape'¹⁰³.

Thinking with the city's amphibiousness helps us understand how water was determinant in cartographic and engineering practices. The blurred edges of representation met with the hard edges of plans for environmental transformation as engineers and surveyors proposed large-scale land reclamation, mangrove clearance and canalization in order to serve the port and the railway. Their surveying and cartography played a crucial role in the modernizing aesthetic and

modernizing engineering of Recife. The *mangue beat* manifesto of the 1990s called this history out as the counterpart and enemy of the mangrove's diversity: 'the irresistible madness of a cynical notion of "progress", which elevated the city to the position of metropolis of the Northeast, was not slow in



Figure 10: Planta da Cidade do Recife, 1932. Source: laptopope.com.br



Figure 9: Details of Caxanga

Top: 1856, Law and Blout
Middle: 1906, Douglas Fox
Bottom: 1932, Municipalidade do Recife

¹⁰² 'O cão sem plumas' [The dog without feathers] Neto, *Selected Poetry, 1937–1990*, 60.

¹⁰³ Raffles, *In Amazonia*, 182.

revealing its fragility'¹⁰⁴. The British genealogies of this notion of progress materialized precisely in the export infrastructure which Castro's geography shows propagated hunger in the Northeast, producing a plantation space which facilitated the outflow of commodities, rather than the distribution of necessities¹⁰⁵. The structure of the sugar economy drove the production of space in the Northeast¹⁰⁶, and hunger in Recife was the underside of the global sugar market.

British capital and colonial knowledge helped produce the urban ecology and landscape of Recife in relation to global forms of modernity. As Maria Kaïka argues, the production of nature – in her work particularly through water – was always part of the production of modernity, whether through mass infrastructure, concepts of sanitation or the separation of the public and the private¹⁰⁷. The Fox, Blout and Hawkshaw maps provide a concrete instantiation of Mignolo's argument that 'there is no modernity without coloniality and that coloniality is constitutive, and not derivative, of modernity'¹⁰⁸. Colonial modernity altered urban space through epistemic flows. Castro's concept of amphibiousness emerged at one extrusion of networks of spatial power and knowledge which also produced nature and space in Europe, in the metropole¹⁰⁹. As the Bahian geographer Milton Santos wrote, 'landscapes of underdeveloped countries are, in reality, derived from the necessities of the economy of industrial countries where decisions are finally made'¹¹⁰. The marsh and port landscapes of the Thames are produced in relation to the marsh and port landscapes of the Capibaribe and the Beberibe: Black Atlantic landscapes – just as much as infrastructures – are relationally produced.

D. *Aterramento*

Having explored amphibious landscape and infrastructure I want to turn, now, to dwelling, and specifically to the *mocambos* of these amphibious areas and to the process of *aterramento* – land-making – to which they were subject. James Holston writes, in *Insurgent Citizenship* (2008), that in twentieth century Brazil, migrants 'became modern industrial workers in urban peripheries they constructed out of "bush"'¹¹¹. Holston's emphasis is on the *they*, but I am arguing that it is worth

¹⁰⁴ Galinsky, *Maracatu Atômico* Appendix.

¹⁰⁵ See also Cowell, 'Cityward Migration'.

¹⁰⁶ For work on the sugar economy of the Northeast see Dabat, *Moradores de Engenho*; Rogers, *The Deepest Wounds*; Andrade, *Land and People*. For other work on sugar economies beyond the Northeast see Mintz, *Sweetness and Power the Place of Sugar in Modern History*.

¹⁰⁷ Kaika, *City of Flows*.

¹⁰⁸ Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs*, ix.

¹⁰⁹ See Oliver, 'The Thames Embankment and the Disciplining of Nature in Modernity'.

¹¹⁰ Santos, *Por Uma Geografia Nova*, 39.

¹¹¹ Holston, *Insurgent Citizenship*, 5.

dwelling, here, on the *bush*. The history of the mangroves and *mocambos* in Recife can show how particular ideologies of nature, associated with the material ecologies of particular landscapes, are key to the production of urban space. New arrivals in Recife were attracted to the opportunities presented by infrastructural space. The ‘bush’, in Recife, was the *mangue*: as outlined above, this is a particularly obstinate bush, with particular qualities, far-reaching ecologies and deep cultural



Figure 11: *Mocambos*, Recife, 1940s. Arquivo Fotográfico, Fundação Joaquim Nabuco. Arquivo Digital.

meanings. Paraphrasing Marx, Ghertner writes that in millennial Delhi, ‘land got on its hind legs and roared’. There the logics of property meant that the dispossession ‘of slum residents seemed tied to an almost geological process rooted deep in the earth’¹¹². I attempt to make Ghertner’s metaphor concrete: the logics of land and removal of slums in Recife were quite literally ‘tied to a [...] geological process rooted deep in the earth’: this process was *aterramento*: ‘land making’.

As Vera Candiani put it, in her epic work on dry land in Mexico city, ‘drainage and desiccation works are especially revealing in that they transform the very building blocks of ecology – land and water – and therefore fundamentally and irreversibly alter how humans will relate to nature’¹¹³. The interface of land and water in Recife has been contested since the mid-17th century when the modern European city materialized on new, drained land¹¹⁴. Castro explores this moment in detail, and the establishment of the city. The Dutch, Castro argued, could ‘build almost in the water itself’¹¹⁵. Land reclamation technologies developed in the 17th century were co-extensive with land accumulation and the private profit motive in the metropole and the colony¹¹⁶. Amphibious space was home to thousands of people. To some extent the Northeastern counterpart to *favelas*, many of these people lived in *mocambos* built in the intertidal and coastal zones (Figure 11). The word *mocambo* intersects with *quilombo*: the community of escaped slaves. Moving beyond Castro, who connected amphibiousness with the

¹¹² Ghertner, *Rule by Aesthetics*, 159.

¹¹³ Candiani, *Dreaming*, xvi.

¹¹⁴ Melo, *Metropolização e subdesenvolvimento*, 53–56.

¹¹⁵ Castro, *A cidade do Recife*, 108.

¹¹⁶ Radkau, *Nature and Power*, 53–56; Mello, *A cartografia holandesa do Recife*, 124–26.

*senzala*¹¹⁷ – the slave quarters – we might also associate them with the *quilombo* – the community of escaped slaves¹¹⁸. As much as it functioned as an architectural and spatial designation for straw-covered, mud-walled huts, the word – like *favela*¹¹⁹ – designated a racially marked site of (potential, imagined, and real) political resistance and potential revolution. The *mocambos* were seen by the elite as threatening political spaces, and by Communist organizers as fertile (if difficult) territory¹²⁰. The landscape which these *mocambos*, mangroves and mud-flats made up became the subject of a state-led process of destruction. This took on various forms from the 1920s-50s, but all embodied a hygienist desire for aesthetic urban order and all involved alliances between the state and capital. In more or less explicit ways they all had the intention of eradicating amphibious informal urbanism¹²¹. Maria Kaika notes that the history of burying rivers in London was associated with clearing slums -- that purifying nature and cleansing society were intimately connected goals¹²². This duality has long applied in Recife: clearing mangroves and clearing *mocambos* were processes joined at the root: produced as abject space beyond urban modernity, together they became the target of what Katherine McKittrick has called ‘urbicide’¹²³.

As Melo Neto’s poem, above, suggests, the colonial modern gaze of surveyors failed to construct a cartographic vocabulary appropriate to the amphibious city, but they also failed to represent amphibious urban inhabitation. The 1906 Fox map registers some ambiguous signs of *mocambos*, but other evidence of their presence suggests that their existence is greatly under-represented¹²⁴. As Charles Fortin argues, they were occluded by official mapping until the 1980s, when, ‘in reality, they housed half the city’¹²⁵. However, in the maps analysed above these erasures were not complete; there are palimpsests of dwelling. These cartographies recall Castro’s evocation of the urban landscape of *mocambos* in a 1936 article ‘*O Despertar dos Mocambos*’ (The Mocambos Awake): ‘in this uncertain hour, still soaked with the colour of night, but with just a little breath of morning, Motocolombó Road fades into invisibility amidst the mangroves, with its *mocambos* still sleeping and dark’¹²⁶. Castro evokes the uncertain

¹¹⁷ Melo and Neves, *Josué de Castro*, 38–40.

¹¹⁸ Lira, ‘Hidden Meanings’.

¹¹⁹ Fischer, ‘The Red Menace Reconsidered’, 1–3.

¹²⁰ Fischer, 9–10.

¹²¹ Gominho, *Veneza Americana x Mucambópolis*, 12–20.

¹²² Kaika, *City of Flows*, 60–75.

¹²³ McKittrick, ‘On Plantations, Prisons, and a Black Sense of Place’, 950–53.

¹²⁴ See for example Cowell, ‘Cityward Migration’; Gominho, *Veneza Americana x Mucambópolis*.

¹²⁵ Fortin, *Rights of Way to Brasília Teimosa*, xii.

¹²⁶ Castro, ‘O Despertar Dos Mocambos’, 21.

aesthetic of the informal city and recalls the urban politics of space. The *mocambos*' 'awakening' is politically freighted: Motocolombó Road was near the epicentre of the uprising of 1935¹²⁷.

Aesthetic erasure of such habitation was not exclusive to Recife; 'the official tenets of cartography' have long failed across the Americas to represent 'black geographies'¹²⁸. In Brazil this has a long history not only in terms of black, but of Amerindian geographies. In his analysis of cartographic erasures within emergent colonial geopolitics in Brazil, Neil Safier argued that: 'while Harley asserted that entire populations of Amerindians were eliminated with the stroke of a single pen, it is more plausible to see this cartographic evacuation as a process whereby information was ingested and reincorporated into other forms'¹²⁹. This helps understand the connection between cartography and *aterramento*. *Aterramento* proceeded through knowledge production and aesthetic practice, as well as through violence¹³⁰. When amphibious space was brought into representation, it was as the subject of proposed erasure. Censuses were crucial tools in the imposition of hygienist governance on the amphibious city, and through them the *mocambos*/mangroves were brought into being as an object of knowledge by the state on behalf of the economic elite and local, national and international capital. *Mocambos* began to be mapped as the urban population expanded and became a bio-political object of knowledge for urban planning in the early 20th century. In a 1923 census in Recife, 'of 39,026 dwellings surveyed, 51.1% were considered "deficient" *mocambos*'¹³¹. *Mocambos* became increasingly controversial in the 1920s among the state and elite¹³². Long part of the urban process both in Recife and Brazil¹³³, urban hygienism marked the *mocambo*/mangrove as the target for the cleansing power of urban modernity. Impulses towards destruction of *mocambos* began to emerge in the 1920s¹³⁴: and calls to burn down the *mocambos* and stories of arson were reported through the decade in the *Diário de Pernambuco*¹³⁵.

Urban destruction was associated with property speculation. Castro himself wrote about a deliberate landslide wiping out a *favela* in Rio in 1929 for political and commercial gain¹³⁶. By the early 1930s debates over how to deal with *mocambos* were playing out in Recife's press¹³⁷. On the 8th March 1936

¹²⁷ Gominho, *Veneza Americana x Mucambópolis*.

¹²⁸ McKittrick, 'On Plantations, Prisons, and a Black Sense of Place', 949.

¹²⁹ Safier, 'The Confines of the Colony: Boundaries, Ethnographic Landscapes, and Imperial Cartography in Iberoamerica', 156–57.

¹³⁰ Corriea, 'Assistencialismo'.

¹³¹ Barros, *A década 20*.

¹³² Lira, 'Construção'.

¹³³ Chalhoub, *Cidade febril*; Meade, 'Civilizing' Rio.

¹³⁴ Lopes, *A Cruzada Modernizante e Os Infiéis No Recife*, 1922–26, 305–10.

¹³⁵ See eg. 17th June 1923, 2nd November 1923, 12th December 1929

¹³⁶ Undated. CEHIBRA.Jdc.13

¹³⁷ Pandolfi, *Pernambuco de Agamenon Magalhães*, 66–67.

Castro wrote an article for the *Diario Carioca* criticizing the attacks on *mocambos* and defending urban informality: ‘what undermines the *mocambo* in Recife is the area where it is built. Low-lying, humid and in the mangroves. It is an area of mud, mosquitoes, and crabs. It is the only urban area that cannot be turned to more profitable production, so it is exploited in the planting of the proletarian vegetation of the *mocambos*’¹³⁸. Castro emphasizes that the condition of amphibious life is forced upon the working classes, but that urban transformation driven by a desire to erase must be resisted. The timing of Castro’s article is very important. The year before, an abortive revolution had taken place in Recife, when a coalition of mutinous army officers and armed civilians attempted to join a national, communist-inspired uprising. The centre of the conflict between the revolutionaries and the state was in the mangrove-lined area of *Largo da Paz*, close to the Motocolombó Road Castro wrote about (at the top left of Figure 7). As Castro’s novel outlines, the uprising fizzled out, but the mangrove areas were increasingly associated with the potential for revolution. Having seen off further challenges and – under the largely spurious threat of fully-fledged communist revolution – in 1937 President Vargas instigated the *Estado Novo*, effectively suspending the constitution and democracy until 1945.

In July 1939, the proto-fascist administration ¹³⁹ of Agamenon Magalhães launched the *Liga Social Contra o Mocambo* (Social League Against the Mocambo, LSCM), which later became the *Serviço Social Contra o Mocambo* (Social Service Against the Mocambo, SSCM). *Mocambos* were characterized as repellent, unhygienic and dangerous: ‘the *mocambo* which repels. The *mocambo* which is the tomb of a race [...] a sombre landscape of



Figure 12: 'The landscape which is disappearing'. Source: Serviço Social Contra o Mocambo' Report 1948. Ano I. No 2

human misery [...] which mutilates human energy and annuls work. Of the *mocambo* which is “a cell of social discontent””¹⁴⁰. LSCM couched its civilizational, modernizing mission in the conjuncture of techno-scientific discourses of medicine and planning¹⁴¹ and commissioned a fresh census of the 45,000 *mocambos* in the city. Castro’s defence of *mocambos* therefore ran counter to a discourse of erasure based on racially inflected hygienist pretexts of public health. The SSCM bulletin in 1948 equated

¹³⁸ ‘Mocambo: Habitação Hygienica’. *Diario Carioca*. 8th March 1936

¹³⁹ Lira, ‘Construção’; Julião, Cambão - The Yoke: The Hidden Face of Brazil, 39.

¹⁴⁰ *Folha da Manhã*. 12th August 1939

¹⁴¹ Outtes, *O Recife*, 19–56.

mocambos to plague and syphilis¹⁴² and the census of 1948 was part-funded by the State's Directory of Sanitation and proceeded on the basis of zoning conducted by the service against Yellow Fever, continuing a history going back to the 17th century of the planning of the city emerging from the spatiality of disease¹⁴³. Clearing mangroves was one of the key tools of hygienism. It is a sad irony that the destruction of mangrove forests probably increased the likelihood of disease¹⁴⁴.

The hygienist drive, however, was primarily aesthetic: the overwhelming priority of the state was to destroy *mocambos* where the elite could see them¹⁴⁵. The LSCM and SSCM explicitly announced themselves as efforts to destroy *uma paisagem* 'a landscape' (Figure 12)¹⁴⁶. This landscape was centrally connected to infrastructure: the decree of 1934 by Governor Novais Filho, specifically banned them within 200 metres of railway lines, tramways and roads¹⁴⁷. Infrastructural space and the modernizing visual aesthetic intersected. Magalhães later wrote a series of editorials in the *Folha da Manhã*:

'the men of the Northeast look to the banks of the rivers and mangroves where a sad and miserable humanity lives, and think of the possibility of the resurrection of all of it, of being able to scratch out that vegetative and inferior life and replace it with a more dignified life through the transformation of the environment. The *mocambos* of Recife will come down. And there will rise another city: clean, fed, without children with distended stomachs, face down in the mud, catching crabs'¹⁴⁸.

The real 'men of the Northeast' are contrasted to an inferior form of semi-humanity. Ecology, landscape and racial hierarchy: the mud, the snarled roots of the mangroves and the dirty, vegetative masses are tangled up in language. Planning discourse in Recife had eugenic notes¹⁴⁹, but was also and inseparably a politics of nature. Magalhães wrote:

'The idle life, the life that the income of the *mocambos* provides, is a life without restlessness and without greatness. It is a life of stagnant water. [...] [that] generates in its breast the venom of larvae, which are the enemies of life. Enemies of life, as are

¹⁴² Various, 'Serviço Social Contra o Mocambo', 25.

¹⁴³ Outtes, *O Recife*, 21.

¹⁴⁴ Dean, With Broadax and Firebrand, 197.

¹⁴⁵ Bezerra, Alagados, mocambos e mocambeiros. [Marshes, mocambos and mocambeiros], 25–30, 44.

¹⁴⁶ Leite, 'Contra-Usos e Espaço Público', 115–34; Melo, *Metropolização e subdesenvolvimento*, 66–68.

¹⁴⁷ Gominho, Veneza Americana x Mucambópolis, 61.

¹⁴⁸ Editorial. *Folha da Manhã*. Recife. 2nd August 1939

¹⁴⁹ Outtes, 'Disciplining Society through the City'.

the *mocambos* and the sub-soil of cities, where the polluted waters contaminate pure waters, which come from the deepest layers of the earth'¹⁵⁰.

The mangrove's materiality is the root and branch of the racialization of landscape. Thirty years earlier the influential engineer Saturnino Brito had in fact argued that the subsoil and waters of Recife, though in places toxic, had an undeserved reputation as intrinsically unhygienic¹⁵¹. Brito saw his role as a sanitary engineer as protecting and healing the relationship between the physical, moral, and environmental conditions of urban life¹⁵². However, for Magalhães the *science* of nature was not as important as a *racial ideology* of nature. The obsessive repetition of 'life' does little to hide the fascination with death in the binary Magalhães imagines between purity and pollution. He wrote to President Vargas seeking federal support for the LSCM:

'out of the physical conditions of the city of Recife – low-lying and invaded by the tides – originates its typical dwelling: the *mocambo*. [...] To overcome the *mocambo* it is necessary first of all to modify the physical conditions which give origin to it, and it is necessary to do away with the low lands [...] and the marshes which deform and make ugly the principal districts of the city'¹⁵³.

This is a determinist ideology and aesthetic of nature – marsh creates *mocambo* – to be rid of one you must destroy the other¹⁵⁴.

For people living in the *mocambos*, then, life in the mud was to exist in a state of fundamentally contested humanity, cast as conditional, compromised or deathly: what McKittrick calls an 'inhuman geography'¹⁵⁵. Magalhães called *mocambeiros* 'a submerged species of humanity'¹⁵⁶. In his work, Castro turns this submergence on its head, insisting on the vitality of amphibious humanity and on the

3. Demolições de mocambos, no distrito do Recife (único), segundo os meses - 1939/43.

M E S E S	Mocambos demolidos (*)				
	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943
Janeiro	-	302	331	216	111
Fevereiro ...	-	182	233	380	239
Março	-	194	288	173	131
Abril	-	115	351	163	147
Maió	-	100	278	160	157
Junho	-	180	209	159	274
Julho	-	96	243	152	206
Agosto	300	27	235	154	206
Setembro	224	140	270	141	227
Outubro	219	128	297	137	174
Novembro	216	335	216	121	161
Dezembro	250	431	285	177	194
T O T A L	1.209 (**)	2.128	3.306	2.133	2.231

(*) - Excluídas as demolições efetuadas diretamente pelos próprios terrenos de terrenos
 (**) - A Campanha Contra o Mocambo teve início no segundo semestre de 1939.

Figure 13: List of numbers of *mocambos* destroyed in Recife by month, 1939-43. *Liga Social Contra o Mocambo*, Relatório 1943. Arquivo Público Estadual Emerenciano Jordão, Recife

¹⁵⁰ Magalhães. *Folha da Manhã*, 4th August 1939

¹⁵¹ Brito, *Saneamento*, 14, 19.

¹⁵² Brito, 9–11.

¹⁵³ Magalhães, 'To President Vargas from Agamenon Magalhães'.

¹⁵⁴ This determinism was widespread. eg 'Urbanismo das Arábias', José Marianno (filho), *Diário da Manhã*, 4th April 1933

¹⁵⁵ McKittrick, 'Plantation Futures', 7.

¹⁵⁶ Magalhães, 'Editorial'.

humanism of the hungry, as the previous chapter has explored. ‘Submergence’, nevertheless, as Zeiderman shows, is a precarious form of political identity¹⁵⁷. Castro was combatting the white elite’s discourse of racial supremacy, and for the racial hygienists the masses were not only ‘submerged’ but ‘vegetable’. The *mocambos* were seen as ‘an African village’ within the modern city¹⁵⁸. José Pinto Junior wrote that *mocambeiros* live ‘in Chinese promiscuity and animality, [...] one or more families together, without being able to observe Christian decorum or the edicts of the church’¹⁵⁹. Magalhães is reported as saying the LCSM’s purpose was to “‘get rid of the *mocambos* of the monkeys’”¹⁶⁰. This is part of a long Brazilian history of the animalization of darker-skinned peoples, and the urban poor. Writing in 2012, discussing the ‘genocidal’ process of state violence in contemporary Brazil, Luciane de Oliveira Rocha cites the constant ‘animalization of black people, which leads to the need for extermination’ and expulsion¹⁶¹. Urban transformation aimed at whitening and Europeanizing Brazilian culture was not only prevalent in Recife but in Rio and elsewhere¹⁶². *Favelas* and *mocambos* were seen from the outside as ‘synonymous with violence, immorality and disease – all clearly connected to various negative notions of blackness’¹⁶³.

This racial, socio-natural hygienism progressed with a certain glee. In the 1940s the *Bulletin of the City and Port of Recife* published monthly totals of *mocambos* destroyed (Figure 13), and in 1942 the LCSM produced a souvenir map of the city including a macabre illustration of demolished *mocambos* (Figure 14). Gregorio Bezerra described the 1930s as ‘a period of great worry for [*mocambeiros*]. There was great pain and many tears’¹⁶⁴; ‘the privileged classes [...] expell[ed] the *caranguejos*, the *siris*’¹⁶⁵ and

¹⁵⁷ Zeiderman, ‘Submergence’, 811.

¹⁵⁸ *Diario da Manhã*. Recife. 7th April 1933

¹⁵⁹ *Folha da Manhã*. Recife. 18th August 1939

¹⁶⁰ Cavalcanti, *O caso eu conto, como o caso foi*, iv:29.

¹⁶¹ Rocha, ‘Black Mothers’ Experiences of Violence in Rio de Janeiro’, 64.

¹⁶² Meade, ‘Civilizing’ Rio; Skidmore, *Black into White: Race and Nationality in Brazilian Thought*, 131–32.

¹⁶³ Vargas, ‘The Inner City and the Favela’, 21.

¹⁶⁴ Bezerra, *Alagados, mocambos e mocambeiros*. [Marshes, mocambos and mocambeiros], 44.

¹⁶⁵ Another species of mangrove-dwelling crab

the *mocambeiros*, without greater concern that of increasing their own wealth'¹⁶⁶. The communist *Folha do Povo* reported on grassroots movements and the threat of eviction¹⁶⁷, calling the LSCM 'demagogic' and 'fascist'¹⁶⁸. For Bezerra, this mid-twentieth century violence continued that of the previous century's modes of urbanization: 'making land, invading the mangroves and spilling blood over the marshlands of Recife'¹⁶⁹. As the *mangue beat* musicians Fred Zero Quatro and Renato Lins later put it in the *mangue beat* manifesto, 'the fastest way also to obstruct and evacuate the soul of a city like Recife is to kill its rivers and fill up its estuaries'¹⁷⁰.



Figure 14: 'Mocambos Demolished: 8,049'. Detail from illustrated map. *Liga Social Contra o Mocambo*, Relatório 1942. Arquivo Público Estadual Jordão Emerenciano, Recife

The ecology of the city precipitated a particular modality of displacement, through *aterramento*: 'land-making.' As a material transformation, *aterramento* can offer insights into what Nik Heynen calls 'the interconnections between infrastructure, property investment, property destruction, white supremacy and biological/chemical/ecological reactions'¹⁷¹. I hesitate to translate *aterramento* as 'land reclamation'. 'Reclamation' occludes the initial amphibiousness of territory and presupposes a right to 'reclaim' land from some state of lack, overriding the intrinsic right to exist of amphibious ecology or dwelling. It sees amphibious space as unpeopled, while amphibious space was populated and used. Not so much 'reclaiming' land, *aterramento* created new kinds of landscape. Nevertheless, for Magalhães it was the vital primary tool: 'we must close the cycle of the crab, *aterrando* [earthing] the inundated areas and the marshes of the city'¹⁷². In the same period Mussolini's project to turn the 'death-inducing swamp'¹⁷³ of the Pontine Marshes into an ideal landscape similarly figured wet landscapes as degenerate, infertile wildernesses. As in Recife, environmental transformation was embedded in an authoritarian idea of modernity¹⁷⁴. *Atterrimento* continued under different regimes but each

¹⁶⁶ Bezerra, *Alagados, mocambos e mocambeiros*. [Marshes, mocambos and mocambeiros], 34.

¹⁶⁷ Eg *Folha do Povo*, 25th January 1947

¹⁶⁸ *Folha do Povo*, [date obscured] November 1948

¹⁶⁹ Bezerra, *Alagados, mocambos e mocambeiros*. [Marshes, mocambos and mocambeiros], 39.

¹⁷⁰ Galinsky, *Maracatu Atômico* Appendix.

¹⁷¹ Heynen, 'Urban Political Ecology II', 839.

¹⁷² Magalhães, 'O Cyclo Do Carangueijo [The Cycle of the Crab]'.

¹⁷³ Caprotti and Kaika, 'Producing the Ideal Fascist Landscape', 620.

¹⁷⁴ Caprotti and Kaika, 620.

administration brought the same: ‘one road more, one marsh less in the landscape of the city’¹⁷⁵. Yet the mangrove proved a challenge to the technologies of hygienism: American-made drainage equipment blocked and snagged amid mangrove roots as urban visions were imposed upon a recalcitrant ecology¹⁷⁶. The vigorous, rhizomatic ecology of the mangrove, and the resistance of human populations consistently got in the way of eugenic hygienism.

It is important to avoid a technological determinism here: the production of land was not the preserve of the state. It was manifold, sporadic, and often the labour of the poor¹⁷⁷. Castro himself recognized¹⁷⁸ that the inhabitants of the mangroves themselves produced land through techniques arguably brought along slave routes¹⁷⁹. Indigenous, Afro-Brazilian and internal migrant communities continue to inhabit and make land in mangroves and deltas¹⁸⁰. The land produced in this way by *mocambeiros* was predominately formed as use value. Under the auspices of the state, on the other hand, *aterramento* produced land in the form of commodity, as exchange value. Drawing up property rights, exchange and profit underpinned the structure and purpose of the LSCM and its successors. These currents continue to flow in Recife¹⁸¹: law and property are central dynamics of peripheral urbanization in Brazil¹⁸², and as Ermínia Maricato, for example, has long argued, for many decades urban land law in Brazil has been applied arbitrarily, unevenly and partially¹⁸³.

What *aterramento* highlights, though, is more specifically the intersection of law and ecology. Castro wrote that ‘in the mangrove, the land is no-one’s, it is the tide’s’¹⁸⁴. He was both right and wrong – ownership was contested and muddy, but not absent. According to Bezerra, ‘the marshes of Recife, as marine lands, are the property of the Nation. Legally, they are under a regime of settlement and occupation’¹⁸⁵. If the lands are water, they are owned by the state, and if they are land, they can be private property. Bezerra argued that ‘the question of the dominion of the earth, as respects to its possession, its proprietary, in the case of Brazil has its origins rooted in philosophical principles’¹⁸⁶. I

¹⁷⁵ Cavalcanti, O caso eu conto, como o caso foi, iv:78.

¹⁷⁶ Eg Anonymous, ‘O Aterro Dos Alagados de Santo Amaro’.

¹⁷⁷ Gominho, Veneza Americana x Mucambópolis, 15.

¹⁷⁸ Sales and Pimentel, Joao Cabral & Josué de Castro conversam sobre o Recife [João Cabral & Josué de Castro talk about Recife], 108.

¹⁷⁹ Carney and Voeks, ‘Landscape Legacies of the African Diaspora in Brazil’, 141.

¹⁸⁰ Farfán-Santos, Black Bodies, Black Rights; Fortin, Rights of Way to Brasília Teimosa.

¹⁸¹ See for example Nascimento and Bautista, ‘Dinâmica Da Habitação Popular e Do “Interesse Social” No Recife’.

¹⁸² Holston, Insurgent Citizenship.

¹⁸³ See for example Maricato, ‘A Terra é Um Nó Na Sociedade Brasileira... Também Nas Cidades’.

¹⁸⁴ Castro, Documentário Do Nordeste, 26.

¹⁸⁵ Bezerra, Alagados, mocambos e mocambeiros. [Marshes, mocambos and mocambeiros], 55.

¹⁸⁶ Bezerra, 35.

will return, with Marilena Chauí, to some of these philosophical principles in Chapter Four. But, philosophical or not, enclosure was predicated upon the production of dry space. The yearly reports of the LSCM include detailed reports of *aterramento*, listing the area covered in metres squared and – amphibiously – the volume of land produced in metres cubed¹⁸⁷. Transforming land aimed to transform society, turning ‘the one hundred and sixty-five thousand inhabitants of the *mocambos* into property owners, into the petty-bourgeoisie’¹⁸⁸. According to Bezerra it was ‘good business to make land from mangroves and divide it up, or even to divide up the mangroves without even making land’¹⁸⁹. Transformation did not need to be material to release profits; control over planning space could equate to the material process of environmental transformation. Both the legal and the ecological were theoretically necessary, acting in synchrony, but one or other could be materially absent.

Socio-environmental transformation was a political project rooted in anti-communist, authoritarian capitalism. It was an archetypal form of accumulation by dispossession in which ‘the monopoly over the use of the land increases [the urban landless] suffering, living out the same problems which afflict the landless peasant of the interior’¹⁹⁰. So, whilst Castro contended that the mangroves were a kind of commons, this was only half true. Not only were most *mocambeiros* charged high rents for dire housing, but the very amphibiousness of territory was deployed against them to produce commodified land out of common mud. The modernization of amphibious space – material and legal – ‘was not carried out in order to improve the conditions of the poor’ but, as Matthew Gandy put it in the very different context of late twentieth century New York, ‘to enhance the economic efficiency of urban space for capital investment’¹⁹¹. We can see ‘the foundational dispossession’ of *mocambeiros* as ‘constitutive of liberalism and its economic geographies’¹⁹² in Recife. We can see this dispossession as one of ‘banishment,’ in Ananya Roy’s terms, but one that functions not only through a ‘persistent racialization of space’¹⁹³, but also of nature.

Conclusion

There is a bitter coda to this history of *aterramento*. In Castro’s cycle, crabs live off human waste. Chico Science figured the mangroves as an ecology of rubbish, singing, ‘I went to the mangroves to pick trash

¹⁸⁷ LSCM, ‘Relatório Da Liga Social Contra Os Mocambos (LSCM) 1939-1944’; LSCM, ‘Relatório Da Liga Social Contra Os Mocambos (LSCM) 1939-1941’.

¹⁸⁸ Agamenon Magalhães cited Pandolfi, *Pernambuco de Agamenon Magalhães*, 61.

¹⁸⁹ Bezerra, *Alagados, mocambos e mocambeiros*. [Marshes, mocambos and mocambeiros], 39.

¹⁹⁰ Cavalcanti, *O caso eu conto, como o caso foi*, iv:75.

¹⁹¹ Gandy, *Concrete and Clay*, 37.

¹⁹² Roy, ‘Dis/Possessive Collectivism’, A9.

¹⁹³ Roy, A8.

/ to catch crabs, to chat to the vultures'¹⁹⁴. Catching crabs and picking trash are kindred activities; symbols of urban survival. The mangroves are a pollution sink, with their muddy banks filling with rubbish. Recent research shows that Recife's remaining urban mangroves contain high proportions of lead and heavy metals¹⁹⁵. Indeed, the land produced out of amphibious space was itself made from rubbish. The *Diario de Pernambuco* in 1949 described *aterramento* with rubbish in evocatively named neighbourhoods across the city, from *Boa Vista* ('Beautiful View') to *Ilha dos Ratos* ('Isle of Rats') and *Afogados* ('Drowned'). Recife's neighbourhood nomenclature speaks volumes. Throughout the 1940s land was made with waste, leading to infestations of mice, bad smells and illness¹⁹⁶. *Folha do Povo* separately reported on *aterramento* in *Mustardinha* being carried out with rubbish¹⁹⁷. This was not the creation of the hygienic city but the production of polluted land as a commodity. The poor of Recife were forced out of the mud and onto the rubbish. Infrastructural deprivation and environmental vulnerability remain widespread in Latin America. Recent work in Buenos Aires shows precisely the same process at work along the polluted Riachuelo river: 'the highly toxic debris extracted [...] ends up levelling the ground of the new squatter settlement'¹⁹⁸. The amphibious history of Recife shows that the very creation of urban land is embedded in social processes. The metabolic cycles of urban transformation are embedded inside the earth and ecological injustice is built into the very ground of urban environments.

This chapter has suggested that thinking with Castro's ideas can shed light on Recife's historical geographies (its landscape and infrastructures), and how they are bound up with the historical geographies (landscapes, infrastructures) of the wider Atlantic world, and what Castro called the geography of hunger. Moving from the influence of regional geography, Castro's writing on amphibiousness was embedded in a struggle in which the conflation of pollution, race and nature had specific political meanings and material outcomes. The philosopher Marilena Chauí identifies the 'foundational myth' of Brazil as the production of Nature as Nation. It has an ecological element deeply implicated in the history and aesthetics of the Northeast:

'The division in nature between the coast [...] and the arid backlands, a place of evil ruled by the devil who is always ready to strike, first appears in poems and plays by the young Jesuit Anchieta. "Evil is spreading in the backlands or hiding in caves and

¹⁹⁴ Manguetown, from *Afrociherdelia*.

¹⁹⁵ Nóbrega, 'Fontes de Contaminação'.

¹⁹⁶ *Diario de Pernambuco*, 11th November 1949

¹⁹⁷ *Folha do Povo*, 6th December 1947

¹⁹⁸ Auyero and Berti, *In Harm's Way*, 175.

swamps, from which it comes out at night in the species of a snake, rat, bat and leech.

But the mortal danger is when these external forces penetrate the souls of men.”¹⁹⁹.

For the 16th century Jesuit the ecology of division is diverse but specific. ‘As *locations*’, Stuart Oliver argues, marshes ‘have been presented as marginal, intermediate between land and sea; marshlands as *landscapes* have been presented as unfixed and unstable, subject to contestation.’ They are liminal spaces ‘from which *something begins its presencing*’²⁰⁰. In Ananya Chakravarti’s analysis of the historical cartographies of Brazil he recounts tales of ‘mermen’, the ‘*moradores de água*’ [dwellers in water] described in Portuguese colonial accounts of the Brazilian Northeast. They come to represent a dangerous, unknowable kind of space, explicitly linked to amphibianity²⁰¹. These ‘mermen’, through the racial gaze of the European colonizers, could well refer to either escaped slaves or indigenous groups living in terraqueous environments. The threat of the mangroves and mudflats in Recife has a long epistemic history: sites from where the devil of promiscuity, disease and revolution may emerge: from where the ‘mortal danger’ of ‘external forces’ threatened to ‘begin its precensing’ (see Figure 14). Urban hygienism was more than a parochial vision of urban modernity. It was a racial ideology of urban nature embedded in global flows of colonial modernity and a historically specific, exclusionary conflation of nature, political repression, nationhood and purity. Where Magalhães, the LSCM and Anchieta saw only morbidity, threat and pollution, amphibiousness and the *homem-caranguejo* insisted on resistance, creativity and sociality. It is in continuing opposition to eugenic and hygienist conceptions of race and nature that the critical geographical formulations of Josué de Castro stand, insisting on the dynamism and agency of the oppressed, and the political project of survival.

¹⁹⁹ Chauí, *Between Conformity and Resistance*, 120.

²⁰⁰ Oliver, ‘Life in an In-between Landscape’, 190.

²⁰¹ Chakravarti, ‘Invisible Cities’, 20–23.

Chapter Three: The many lives of the geography of hunger

Introduction

The first two chapters of this thesis have excavated and deployed two vectors of Josué de Castro's geography: firstly of radical humanism and hunger, and secondly of amphibiousness and urban life. This chapter marks a shift, methodologically and intellectually, to consider his work in terms of disciplinary history, and the historical geography of ideas. One of the projects of this thesis is to think with Castro in order to expand disciplinary horizons by challenging disciplinary histories. This means wrenching his ideas from their context, and applying various kinds and scales of abstraction and contextualization to them. As David Livingstone notes, 'as texts circulate, they transform': 'the movement of ideas from one site to another is never simply relocation; migration always involves modification'¹. Troubling the relationship between texts and ideas, this chapter dwells on the dissemination and reception of the geography and geopolitics of hunger as, in Said's terms, a 'travelling theory'. The history of Castro's ideas, particularly through the publication history of his books, is, as Brazilian historian Helder Remigio de Amorim has recently argued, a 'fertile field' for research². Rather than following the blood and sugar of metabolism, or the mud and crabs of Recife, this chapter's landscape is the myriad editions of these books – their prefaces, maps, rubrics and footnotes. I explore the intellectual plasticity and political valency of the idea of the geography of hunger as it travelled through geography and geopolitics, demography, and radical and anti-colonial politics. Both Castro's praxis, and the reception of the geography of hunger, speak to a post-war context when questions of geopolitics, humanitarianism and Third World-ism were molten and uncertain. Castro's own position – as a Brazilian intellectual and globally mobile diplomat – gave him a certain protean quality. This, however, was time-limited. The 1964 military coup saw to it that his counter-hegemonic position became unequivocal, as he took on the forced subjectivity of exile.

A. Travelling Theory

In 1983 Edward Said wrote that, 'like people and schools of criticism, ideas and theories travel'³. His idea of 'travelling theory' has become hugely influential in postcolonial studies, literary scholarship,

¹ Livingstone, 'The Geography of Darwinism', 34.

² Amorim, 'Em Tempos', 61.

³ Said, 'Traveling Theory'.

the history of science, and the history of geographical ideas. David Livingstone argues that, for Said, 'theory is the *product* of time and place and for that very reason is always *appropriated* in time and place'⁴. Said suggests that 'there is [...] a discernible and recurrent pattern' to the movement of ideas, and identifies 'three or four stages common to the way any theory or idea travels'. These are the 'origin, or what seems like one', 'a distance transversed', 'a set of conditions – call them conditions of acceptance or, as an inevitable part of acceptance, resistances', and finally 'the now full (or partly) accommodated (or incorporated) idea is to some extent transformed by its new uses, its new position in a new time and place'⁵. Timothy Brennan has argued that the essay in which Said lays out the notion of 'Travelling Theory' 'is about the willful appropriation of the past for reuse in the present: the distortion, not merely adaptation, of earlier moments of the chain of influence'⁶. Following theory as it travels is to pay 'critical attention to history and to situation'⁷ of ideas. Travelling theory is a kind of method: how ideas travel – from origins, across distance, reformed under new conditions and settled in new formations – itself becomes a tool for thinking with.

In the original essay Said follows György Lukács' 1923 book, *History and Class Consciousness* as it makes its 'particular voyage from Hungary to Paris, with all that entails [which] seems compelling enough, adequate enough for critical scrutiny, unless we want to give up critical consciousness for critical hermeticism'⁸. Said analyses how Lukács' ideas moved into the hands first of Lucien Goldmann, whose 'reading [...] mutes [Lukács'] almost apocalyptic version of consciousness'⁹. He then traces its travels into Raymond Williams's work. A significant figure for Said, the Welsh critic's *The Country and the City* was a guiding star for his own *Orientalism*¹⁰. What Said took from Williams – as well as from Antonio Gramsci – was a profoundly geographical orientation. Following ideas is to follow them geographically, as well as historically. It is on the basis of his methodological analysis of how theory travels that he redoubles his commitment to an engaged dialectic between the world, the text and the critic. The essay is less a denunciation of mis-appropriation than a commitment to how the travels of ideas produce new intellectual alternatives. He connects how ideas travel with why that movement is of theoretico-political importance. He concludes: 'to map the territory covered by all the techniques of dissemination, communication, and interpretation, to preserve some modest (perhaps shrinking) belief in noncoercive human community; if these are not imperatives, they do at least seem to be attractive

⁴ Livingstone, 'The Spaces of Knowledge', 7.

⁵ Said, 'Traveling Theory', 227.

⁶ Brennan, 'Edward Said as a Lukácsian Critic', 17.

⁷ Said, 'Traveling Theory', 227.

⁸ Said, 236.

⁹ Said, 236.

¹⁰ Brennan, 'Edward Said'.

alternatives. And what is critical consciousness at bottom if not an unstoppable predilection for alternatives?’¹¹

It is as part of an alternative, multi-lingual tradition in the history of geography that I analyse Josué de Castro. This is valuable in order to multiply the places and geographies that count in the history of geography. However, it is also more than this: I follow Castro’s ideas not as fixed, but as constantly reforming and mobile. As Gillian Rose has argued, it is the ‘spatialization of tradition as a transparent territory that feminists need to displace’¹². Simply adding the Northeast of Brazil to a static, coherent and transparent territory of disciplinary knowledge does not offer a true alternative. We need, rather, to bring together Said’s idea that the movement of knowledge itself constructs theory with Donna Haraway’s contention that (feminist) ‘objectivity means quite simply *situated knowledges*’¹³. That is to say that if objectivity is situated, it is also mobile. As Said, Livingstone and many others remind us, knowledge does not only come from somewhere, it also moves. This movement is part of the essence of ideas, not merely something that follows from them. I suggest that this is an important part of overcoming Eurocentric thought: not only to see that knowledge claims emerge from particular historical geographies, but that the movement of knowledge takes place along frictive paths, and through patterns established by real and imaginary geographies. Eurocentrism functions not only at the source and in the object of knowledge, but through its mobility.

What follows necessarily from this – but has been under-emphasized in histories of geography – is a sustained interest in translation. As Brent Hayes Edwards notes, the need to attend ‘to the ways that discourses [...] *travel*, the ways they are translated, disseminated, reformulated in transnational contexts marked by difference’¹⁴. Translations of Castro have had multiple intentions, functions, itineraries and destinations. As David Featherstone and Brent Hayes Edwards have shown, the production of international solidarities would be impossible without acts of translation¹⁵. In the case of Castro, translations have been multiple, but incomplete and highly partial: some seeds of solidarity took root, while others fell on stony ground. Studying translation also attends to the level of the sentence. Haraway writes: ‘feminism loves another science: the sciences and politics of interpretation, translation, stuttering, and the partly understood. [...] Translation is always interpretive, critical, and partial. Here is a ground for conversation, rationality, and objectivity’¹⁶. Translation is one of the boundaries at which difference is constituted, which Gillian Rose suggests feminist historiography of geography should

¹¹ Said, ‘Traveling Theory’, 247.

¹² Gillian Rose. 1995. ‘Tradition and Paternity: Same Difference?’ *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*. 20.4.414-416

¹³ Haraway, ‘Situated Knowledge’, 581.

¹⁴ Edwards, *The Practice of Diaspora*, 7.

¹⁵ Edwards, *The Practice of Diaspora*; Featherstone, *Solidarity*.

¹⁶ Haraway, ‘Situated Knowledge’, 589.

attend to¹⁷. It is in these senses that I not only follow travelling theory, but also translation, in an attempt to multiply disciplinary histories, and expand disciplinary horizons.

For Claudio Minca,

‘disciplines are, above all, the site of the production of a self-referential knowledge, an on-going elaboration of propositions, discussion, experimentation, and comparison which relies upon the existence of a community of scholars legitimated by reciprocal consideration, internal and external communication networks, these same scholars' social visibility, the accessibility of their propositions and their capacity for self-reproduction’¹⁸.

Crucially for my argument in this chapter, he continues by emphasizing how knowledge moves:

‘it is exactly the interplay between diverse languages which constitutes a discipline, though only as long as the plurality of interests does not result in such a differentiation as to prevent internal communication’ (my emphasis)¹⁹.

The history of geographical ideas requires more attention to histories of translation, in the mould laid out by Hayes Edwards in his history of black internationalism²⁰. Minca’s own notion of ‘Venetian geographical praxis’ remains focused on European geography, but attention to translation, and translation histories, is essential to geographical disciplinarity itself. Lawrence Venuti argues that

‘translation has always functioned as a method of introducing innovative materials and practices into academic institutions, but its success has inevitably been constrained by institutionalized values. Foreign scholarship can enter and influence the academy, although only in terms that are recognizable to it – at least initially’²¹.

Venuti and Minca help us to see translation as the theoretico-practical traffic of meaning across intelligibility and difference²². The passage between similarity and difference, between the new and the familiar, are essential liminal spaces in the history of geographical thinking²³. Translation functions at the level of the world, the text and the critic, as well as the word, the institution and the discipline. Following Castro’s geography and geopolitics of hunger explores the work that translation, non-translation and reception do in establishing both disciplinarity – what kind of discourse counts as

¹⁷ Rose, ‘Tradition and Paternity’.

¹⁸ Minca, ‘Venetian Geographical Praxis’, 288.

¹⁹ Minca, 288.

²⁰ Edwards, *The Practice of Diaspora*.

²¹ Venuti, ‘Translating Derrida on Translation: Relevance and Disciplinary Resistance’, 238–39.

²² Venuti, 238–39.

²³ See also Spivak, ‘Translation as Culture’; Spivak, ‘Translating into English’; Jazeel and McFarlane, ‘Responsible Learning’.

geographical – and the object of the discipline – what that discourse is about. When Minca defines ‘geographical praxis also (if not principally) as a constellation of power/knowledge, binding adepts of the same disciplinary cult(ure)s’²⁴, I would add that the co-ordinates of this constellation are mistifying without an analysis of histories of publication, translation and reception. Castro’s understanding of what geography *is* (expansive, holistic, political), and what it should be *about* (hunger, underdevelopment), continue to challenge disciplinary thinking. How they have travelled does so too.

B. Publication: Editions, Prefaces, Subtitles, Maps and Publishers

Innes Keighren’s work approaches the reception of geographical knowledge in highly specific geographical and scalar terms. He attends to the architecture, production, publishing, reviewing, annotation of books – indeed one particular book, Ellen Semple’s *Influences of Geographic Environment* (1911) – to explore the dense and uneven geography of geographical ideas²⁵. Keighren grounds the history of ideas in the materiality of dissemination and exchange. In Robert Westman’s words, ‘books and letters, not ‘isms, passed hands’²⁶. Semple and Westman are talking about specific historical moments, but in more general terms the notion that ideas only circulate through the passing of material texts is debatable. We can surmise that the work of many geographers – and others – has become canonical without necessarily having been read. However, a focus on the material transit of knowledge – in James Secord’s terms – furnishes a historical approach to placing Donna Haraway’s ‘view from nowhere’²⁷. Since the early 1990s, David Livingstone has brought together the history of geography with the history and study of science to demonstrate that geographical knowledge has emerged under particular conditions in particular spaces at particular times, and that this knowledge travels unevenly and unreliably²⁸. I want to focus on the intersections between this ever-growing area of enquiry²⁹ and the questions of language and translation in the history of geography.

This intersection is empirical and historical, as well as theoretical. The translation and (re)publication of books illuminates the traffic of knowledge across language, but also its constitution and its politics. The intersecting and conflicting histories of Castro’s books demonstrates that translation is not merely

²⁴ Minca, ‘Venetian Geographical Praxis’, 285.

²⁵ See Keighren, *Bringing Geography to Book*.

²⁶ Cited in Secord, ‘Knowledge in Transit’, 665.

²⁷ Shapin, ‘Placing the View from Nowhere’.

²⁸ Livingstone, ‘The Spaces of Knowledge’; See also Shapin, Schaffer, and Princeton University Press, *Leviathan and the Air-Pump*.

²⁹ See Ryan, ‘History and Philosophy of Geography’; Keighren, ‘Geographies of the Book’ and; Keighren et al., ‘Teaching the History of Geography’.

another cog in the wheel of what Robert Darnton called ‘the Communications Circuit’³⁰, an illustration of the material dynamics of the production and distribution of ideas. This model has since been critiqued³¹, but provided an influential way of characterising production and transmission in the history of the book. Whilst Darnton finds a place for publishers, purchasers, binders and many others, he surprisingly ignores the process of translation. This is a common oversight in the field. One exception in the history and geography of the book is Nicholas Rupke’s investigation of how translations altered the meaning of Robert Chambers’ *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation* across European space. He himself noted in 2000 that ‘the part played by translations of scientific texts in the development of science is as yet [...] largely neglected’³². Since then, while there has been a great deal of work on the movement of knowledge³³, and while translation has been given some attention in recent work on historical geography³⁴, it has rarely been sustained³⁵. Furthermore, the geography of reception needs also to account for non-translation. As Nicholas Harrison has recently noted, ‘translation has been an indispensable component of intellectual exchange and development throughout recorded history [...] the translation of a work of literature or scholarship – indeed, of any major cultural document – can have a significant impact on the intellectual community, while the absence of translations impedes the circulation of ideas’³⁶. As we will see, this is a key dynamic in Castro’s case, in which non- and partial translation has not only ‘impeded’, but altered, the circulation of his ideas. As Rupke noted, the mechanisms by which processes of translation alter meanings are various. Not only because translations are ‘autochthonous cultural products’, but also through ‘new, additional prefaces, [...] footnote commentary [...] illustrations, [...] omissions and, most fundamentally, by the very act of cultural relocation’³⁷. I would add editing and the fluid medium of language itself to this list.

Castro landed fully formed in the anglophone world with the *Geography of Hunger* in 1952. By then, in Brazil, and in France, he was already an established author and public figure, with dozens of books and years of public roles behind him. *The Geography of Hunger*, in spite of the title, is in fact a translation of *Geopolítica da Fome* [the Geopolitics of Hunger]. The 1946 *Geografia da Fome* [Geography of Hunger] has never been translated into English. I argue that the translation of only some of his work, alongside the non-translation of other of his work, is one of the major reasons why Castro has been overlooked in anglophone scholarship. Neither *Geopolítica da Fome*, published in 1951, nor

³⁰ Darnton, ‘What Is the History of Books?’; See also Darnton, ‘Revisited’.

³¹ See Secord, ‘Knowledge in Transit’.

³² Rupke, ‘Translation Studies in the History of Science’.

³³ See for example Jöns, Meusburger, and Heffernan, *Mobilities of Knowledge*; Barnes and Abrahamsson, ‘Imprecise Wanderings’; Jöns, ‘Academic Travel from Cambridge University and the Formation of Centres of Knowledge, 1885–1954’.

³⁴ Monk, ‘Canons, Classics, and Inclusion in the Histories of Geography’.

³⁵ For exceptions see Zimmerer, ‘Retrospective on Nature–Society Geography’; Ferretti, ‘Inventing Italy’.

³⁶ Harrison, ‘Notes on Translation as Research’.

³⁷ Rupke, ‘Translation Studies in the History of Science’, 210.

Geografia da Fome, published in 1946, should be thought as the beginning of Castro's career. On the contrary, they are the culmination of the first phase of Castro's work not only in geography, but in the natural and social sciences and public health, the spatial relations of nutrition, ecology, agriculture, socio-economic structure and historical geographies. *Geografia da Fome* sought a more literary style and wider audience than his previous work or much of his later: in writing it, Castro collaborated with Augusto Frederico Schmidt, a poet and influential publisher who also worked with key Brazilian intellectuals, particularly from the Northeast, such as Graciliano Ramos, Raquel de Queiroz, Jorge Amado and Vinicius de Moraes. When published, it caused waves in Brazil and, in translation, in France. It is remarkable for its scope, intellectual breadth, and literary style. Five years later, in 1951, Castro released *Geopolítica da Fome* with the publisher *Casa do Estudante do Brasil* (another definitive edition released slightly later with the bigger publishing house, *Brasiliense*³⁸). Where *Geografia* focussed on Brazil, this book covered the whole world. It was this second book that was published in the UK and the USA in 1952. To add to the confusion, a different, updated edition – also essentially a translation of *Geopolítica* – was later published, in 1977 by Monthly Review Press, in English, as *The Geopolitics of Hunger*. This edition included amendments in parantheses, reportedly from a manuscript edited by Castro in 1973. In France, meanwhile, Castro's *Geografia da Fome* had already been translated and published as *Géographie de la Faim* by *Les Editions Ouvrières* and the geopolitics was published in 1952 *Géopolitique de la Faim*³⁹. (In this chapter italicization is crucial!) I have examined editions in Portuguese, French, Spanish and English, but a wider examination could consider editions in the USSR, Israel, China, Italy and elsewhere (see lists of editions and translations in the Appendix).

The original *Geografia da Fome* had the subtitle 'Hunger in Brazil'. This subtitle later changed, including in the French translation, to *O Dilema Brasileiro: Pão ou Aço* – in French, *Le Dilemme Brésilien: Pain ou Acier* [The Brazilian Dilemma: Bread or Steel]. This second subtitle grounds the geography of hunger within practical and political debates about national economic development, industrial strategy and demography. Castro's role in the intellectual and political ferment over national development will be the subject of the next chapters, but we can read it even in his books' changing subtitles. Most prominent in Brazil, Castro's place in these debates was also legible in France. The *Geopolítica da Fome* gained a subtitle of '*Ensaio sobre os problemas de Alimentação e de População do Mundo*' [Essay on the problems of world diet and population], which placed the work in the field of demography. A new subtitle emerged on the cover of a 1972 edition of *Géographie de la Faim*: *Tragique, permanente, accusatrice: la faim* [Tragic, permanent, accusatory: hunger].

³⁸ Neves, 'Josué de Castro: Cronologia'.

³⁹ It's worth noting the publishers are all left-wing bastions: Monthly Review Press, Gollancz and Editions Ouvrières. The Brazilian edition also circulated in Portugal as bookshop and library shelfmarks, and contemporary Portuguese reviews indicate.

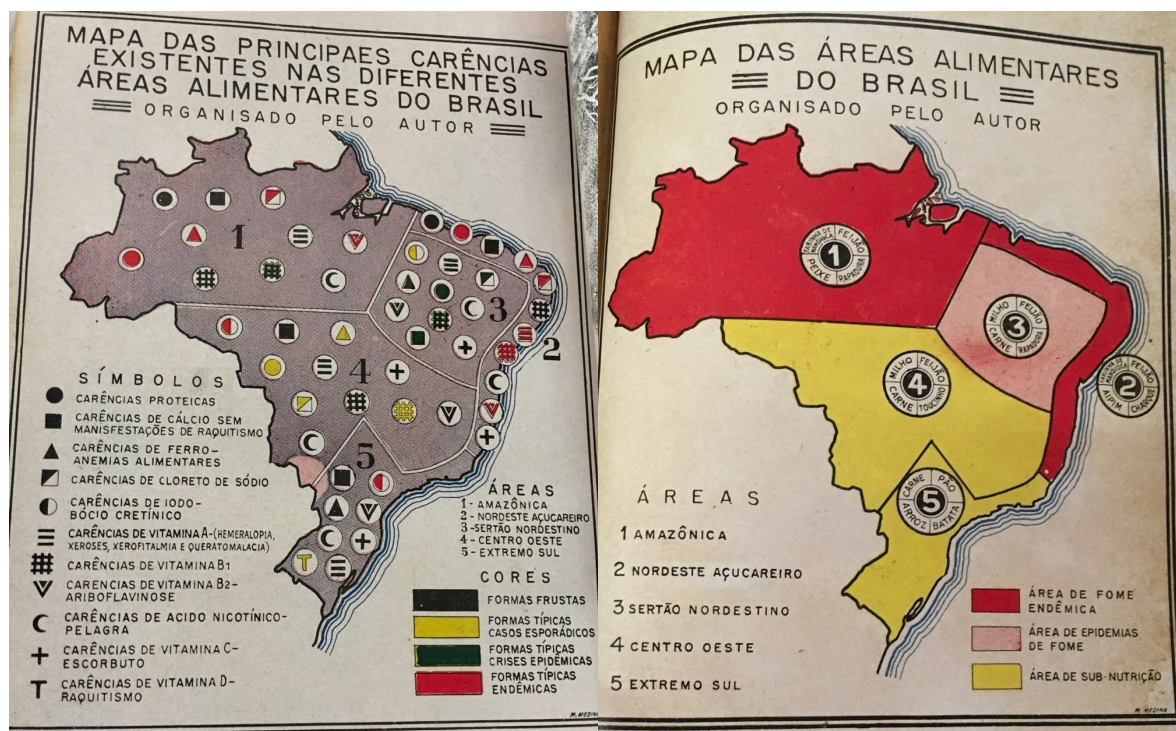


Figure 15: Maps from *Geografia da Fome*, Josué de Castro, 1946. Reproduced by permission of Anna Maria de Castro

Castro was deeply enthusiastic about publishing his work in Europe and North America⁴⁰. He had distinct conceptions of his audience in different languages and used the architecture of his books to nuance ideas towards them. For instance, he characterizes his contribution to geopolitics in varying terms for particular audiences. In the introduction to the Brazilian edition of *Geopolítica da Fome* Castro explained that the book was written for the North American readership and is therefore somewhat unlike his previous work. He registers his caution about the terminology of the Brazilian title and is wary of how ‘geopolítica’ will be interpreted, but he explains his desire to reclaim geopolitics from its Nazi inheritances⁴¹. Castro positions the Brazilian edition, therefore, as an intellectual intervention into the field of geopolitics. This contention is absent in English language editions of *The Geography of Hunger*, in which not only is the word ‘geopolitics’ missing from the title, but the framing intellectual, methodological reflections is also missing. In contrast, in the French edition of *Géographie de la Faim* (not the Geopolitics), Castro’s intellectual contribution is established not only in the body of the text, but in its prefaces, rubrics and superstructure. On the inside cover a list appears – in French – of books by Castro, including all his early work. The list is somewhat misleading: though they are given French titles, many of the books had not been translated. However, the list figures Castro as the author of a long sequence of work on nutritional and geographical subjects.

⁴⁰ Preface in Castro, *Geography of Hunger*; Castro, ‘To Sanford Greenburger’.

⁴¹ Ferretti, ‘Geographies of Internationalism’, 1 March 2018.

One of Castro's central intentions in *Geografia da Fome* was to map hunger in Brazil. This built on his longstanding work on Brazilian nutrition, and was one of the book's major political interventions⁴². The spatial analysis of hunger, connecting it with landscape, agriculture, social structure, culture and historical geography is one of the book's lasting political contributions. The early editions of the Brazilian book are replete with elegant, full colour maps of hunger, ecological regions and alimentary traditions (Figure 15). In Brazilian editions these maps at times appear and at times do not – only one in the third, but all in the ninth editions, for instance. The *Geopolítica da Fome* largely did not include the same cartographic work. The French translations of *Geografia* include maps. Later editions of the *Geopolítica da Fome* – for instance by *Brasília Editora* in Portugal – see different maps introduced, of world population according to calorie intake, and malnutrition across the world. Polish and English language editions of his work do not include maps. In terms of reception and readership, these are seminally important differences at the levels of aesthetics, interpretation and phenomenology. Cartography is an important part of the text's semantic totality; removing the maps fundamentally alters readers' access to what the geography of hunger is.

Prefaces can chart books' dynamic and multilingual trajectories as particular editions reach different audiences. They can also be a way for authors to re-frame their work. Castro used Brazilian prefaces to emphasize his international reception, to respond to critics, to suggest the ongoing and changing relevance of his arguments, and to clarify points of intellectual political positioning⁴³. He also used the commissioning of prefaces by other writers not only to burnish and enhance his own status, through association, but also to position the book within particular discourses. Furthermore, he selectively reprinted certain prefaces, in translation, in different editions⁴⁴. The prefaces make substantial contributions to how the arguments of the books are to be understood. Lord John Boyd Orr wrote the preface for the first English edition of *The Geography of Hunger*. He wrote that the book should really be called 'Hunger and Politics'. This intervention immediately begins to un-write the book's geography. Both the geopolitical and the geographical are conferred secondary status to a broader positioning of the book as 'political', in a vague sense. While Castro appears to have been delighted with Boyd Orr's preface – and for instance he reprinted it in translation in other editions – it is revealing of the book's reception in English. A book called *Hunger and Politics* would be a very different thing. The English preface places the book squarely in the international humanitarian politics of food: Orr signed it as the former Director of the Food and Agriculture Organization.

⁴² Alves, 'A Contribuição de Josué de Castro'; Azevedo, Lima, and Silva, 'A Fome e a Escassez'; Andrade et al., 'Josué de Castro e o Brasil'.

⁴³ See Prefaces in Castro, *Geopolítica da Fome: Ensaio sobre os Problemas de Alimentação e de População do Mundo*.

⁴⁴ For example including André Mayer's French preface in later Brazilian editions, eg Castro, *Geografia da Fome*.

For Said, traveling theories can ‘shed their insurrectionary force [...be] tamed and domesticated somewhat, and [become] considerably less dramatic in their application and gist’⁴⁵. Boyd Orr’s preface does just this. The English language *Geography of Hunger*, for its many merits, is a sweeping global tract which, whilst motivated by a burning sense of the injustice of hunger, lacks the more detailed, cartographic biosociology of *Geografia da Fome*. The way this idea travelled can be read in the material histories and geographies of how the texts themselves moved in new editions, formats and languages. Boyd Orr’s preface changes what Castro’s work means for an anglophone readership. In publishing it, Castro drew his own work’s sting, and altered his long-term intellectual legacy.

The ideas of the original *Geografia* remain potent because of the methodological proposition they contain⁴⁶, and in France Castro’s methodology is given centre stage in the *Géographie de la Faim* in the editors’ notes and the preface by André Mayer. Further, in the preface to the French translation of the *Geopolítica da Fome*, the influential French geographer Maximillien Sorre, wrote that: ‘Josué de Castro established in this book the principles and foundations of a new method of analysis of the alimentary phenomenon, that can be applied in other regions of the world’⁴⁷. Castro drew on Sorre’s work and Sorre wrote an article in the *Annales de Géographie* ‘La géographie de l’alimentation’ [the geography of alimentation]⁴⁸, in response to Castro’s work. The archive of the *Musée de l’Homme* in Paris holds a copy of the first edition of *Geografia da Fome* given to the influential anthropologist Roger Bastide by Castro (Figure 16). These relationships were part of the ecology of personal friendships which ensured that Castro’s impact in France was greater than in the anglophone world. These exchanges amount to the kind of dialogue across languages and shared interests which, according to Minca, constitute disciplinarity. But they never appeared in English.

The architecture of these editions – prefaces, subtitles, cover flaps – give an insight into how, and with what baggage, the ideas of the geopolitics and geography of hunger travelled. The geography and geopolitics of hunger as ‘methods of analysis’ is largely lacking in the publication frameworks, rubrics

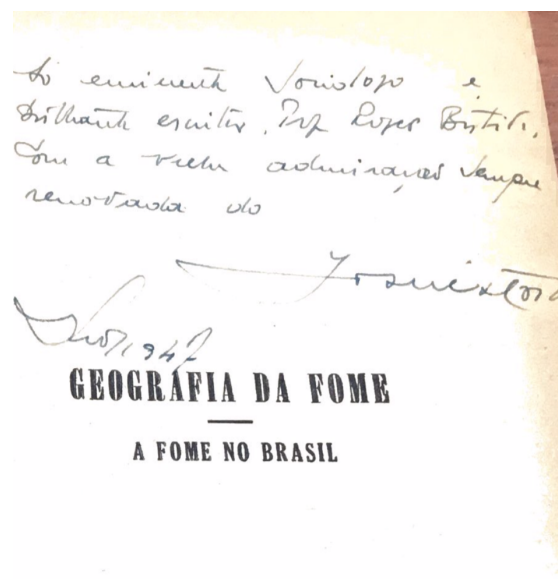


Figure 16: Signed edition of *Geografia da Fome* (1946) from Josué de Castro to Roger Bastide. Inscription reads: ‘To the eminent sociologist and brilliant writer, Professor Roger Bastide, with ever-renewed admiration, always, from Josué de Castro. June [?] 1947’. Source: Archive of Musée de l’Homme, Musée de Quai Branly, Paris

⁴⁵ Said, ‘Traveling Theory Reconsidered’, 437.

⁴⁶ Zanoni, ‘Josué de Castro’.

⁴⁷ Preface in Castro, *Géographie de la faim*, 11.

⁴⁸ Sorre, ‘La Géographie de l’alimentation’.

and footnotes of Castro's English language publication history. The writers of the prefaces – the American novelist Pearl Buck in the USA, and in the UK Boyd Orr – function as validating and valorizing chaperones for the Brazilian author. In contrast to the French and Brazilian editions, the texts' academic scaffolding, including some references, is largely removed in the English editions. The preface to the second edition of the *Géographie de la Faim* indicates the difference between the reception in France and the anglophone world, suggesting that the initial translation in 1949 'caused a profound emotional response in the French reading public and led to a great debate on the subject of hunger'⁴⁹. Castro later noted the success of the 1964 edition⁵⁰, published with *Seuil*. This raises the importance of the publishing houses themselves. *Seuil*, for instance, was linked to leftist cultural intellectuals and secular humanism. Although they published Fanon's *Peau Noirs, masques blancs* [Black Skin, White Masks] in 1952, they were not the most radical of Paris' publishing houses, a role fulfilled by François Maspero⁵¹. In English, Castro has been published by notable leftist houses – Victor Gollancz in London and the Monthly Review Press in New York. The very different ways that publishers – in sometimes collaborative, and sometimes fractious relations with the author himself – brought these books to different publics had an inevitable, and important, impact on how these ideas have travelled. Part of these negotiations were precisely over translation, to which I now turn.

C. Translation

Geopolítica da Fome appeared in English as *The Geography of Hunger* almost simultaneously with its publication in Portuguese. Castro wrote to his US agent, Sanford Greenburger, on February 14th 1949, that he would provide him 'with a literal translation of the original as I write it,' and that Greenburger would then be 'responsible for putting the text into English form acceptable to the American publishers'⁵². Translations multiplied quickly and by the time Castro was writing the preface for its second edition in Brazil, in December 1952, the book had already been translated into eight languages⁵³. Often, for instance in the Spanish and Polish editions, translations were based on the English version by George Reed and G Robert Stange (see list in Appendix). Translation, of course, can yield gratuitous ideological emendations, as Ferretti finds in translations of Reclus⁵⁴. This is largely not the story of the *Geopolítica's* translation into the *Geography*. Nevertheless, important differences emerge, and new passages appear. For example, Castro tried to lever into the English book some of the geographical

⁴⁹ Preface in Castro, *Géographie de la faim*, 11.

⁵⁰ Castro, "“Meus queridos””.

⁵¹ Bush, *Publishing Africa* in French, 43–45.

⁵² Castro, 'To Sanford Greenburger'.

⁵³ See prefaces in Castro, *Geopolítica da Fome: Ensaio sobre os Problemas de Alimentação e de População do Mundo*.

⁵⁴ Ferretti, 'Political Geographies'.

methodology which his previous work had exhaustively expounded. In English a paragraph is added implying that geography can function as an ‘accounting [...] of the mutual relations between the earth and its human inhabitants’⁵⁵. New paragraphs are added giving an overview of his approach to geography⁵⁶, and some strange translations appear: for instance it is odd that Castro’s ‘*as democracias ocidentais e o comunismo oriental*’⁵⁷ is translated as ‘capitalist democracy and Russian democracy’⁵⁸. There are many other examples, but in analysing the significance of translation I want to dwell on the details of three crucial terms important not only to this book, but to Castro’s whole oeuvre: *fome*, *alimentação* and *meio ambiente*. I focus on individual words not because translation is a process of word-for-word transcoding. On the contrary⁵⁹, translation functions at multiple scales, from word, to world, to text, to critic. Rather, these three words are thresholds to broader questions of discipline, culture, meaning, context and interpretation. This is not only to excavate how ideas mutate across languages, but to suggest that new theoretical potential lies in the interstices of translation.

Translating is necessarily always a process of loss, but it can also be a process of expansion, and the accrual of meaning across different systems of reference, lexicon, syntax and poetics. To demonstrate this point we can examine Castro’s use of the word *fome*, hunger, a keystone of his thought. As the first chapter explored, hunger is a complex carrier of meaning which opens onto philosophical, cultural, historical and geographical concerns. Its translation is unstable. In *Geography of Hunger* ‘*fome*’ is translated both as ‘hunger,’ and, at other moments, as ‘famine’ (for example, Castro uses the plural ‘*fomes*’ in relation to what are translated as ‘famines’ in Morocco⁶⁰). *Fome*, largely unlike the English ‘hunger’, can refer to a temporally bound and spatially extended event: a hungering, or a famine⁶¹. The English word ‘hunger’ derives from Germanic languages, while the word *fome* (as well as the French *faim* and the English ‘famine’) derives from the Latin *fames*. In fact, the English ‘hunger’ has a largely obsolete function as a noun with a similar meaning as famine. This was used in the context of the Irish famine, for example by the Irish poet Patrick Kavanagh in his extraordinary poem ‘the great hunger’. The slippage between *fome* and hunger suggests that in Portuguese the difference between hunger (biophysical condition, sensation, individual lack, desire) and famine, (political and natural *event*) is

⁵⁵ Castro, *Geography of Hunger*, 13.

⁵⁶ eg Castro, 29 compare with; Castro, *Geopolítica da Fome: Ensaio sobre os Problemas de Alimentação e de População do Mundo*, 1:76–77.

⁵⁷ Castro, *Geopolítica da Fome: Ensaio sobre os Problemas de Alimentação e de População do Mundo*, 1:55.

⁵⁸ Castro, *Geography of Hunger*, 19.

⁵⁹ See for example Spivak, ‘Translation as Culture’.

⁶⁰ Compare Castro, *Geopolítica da Fome: Ensaio sobre os Problemas de Alimentação e de População do Mundo*, 1:273 and; Castro, *Geography of Hunger*, 213.

⁶¹ See entries for “hunger” and “famine” in “famine, n.” *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, March 2018. Web. Accessed 13 May 2018. And *fome* in *Dicionário infopédia da Língua Portuguesa* [em linha]. Porto: Porto Editora, 2003-2018. [consult. 2018-05-13 14:17:41]. Disponível na Internet: <https://www.infopedia.pt/dicionarios/lingua-portuguesa/fome>

ambiguous, or at least contextual. In Portuguese, the most common phrase for being hungry is *ter fome* – literally, to *have* hunger, usually associated with a prolonged condition, and almost synonymous with *passar fome* [to suffer / pass through / become hunger]. *Estar com fome* [to be with hunger], is also used, largely to indicate a more immediate or temporary state. In these forms, hunger is figured as something which accompanies or dominates, or is possessed. Unlike the English form – in which hunger infiltrates and determines a state of being (one *is* hungry) – these forms externalize hunger as an invader, duration or experience. The two languages suppose different spatio-temporalities for hunger.

Castro discusses translation in the preface to *Geografia da Fome*, noting the difference between the English term ‘starvation’, with its suggestion of death from hunger, and his own interest in hunger more broadly conceived⁶². But the translation of ‘geography of famine’ in Portuguese would be *geografia da fome*. This is relevant to the history of the study of hunger in anglophone geography. Anglophone political ecology itself emerged in good part precisely through work on famine such as Michael Watts’ seminal work *Silent Violence*, which has the subtitle *Food, Famine and Peasantry in Northern Nigeria*⁶³. This continues today in David Nally’s work on the history of the Irish famine, or Mike Davis’ *Late Victorian Holocausts*. Castro’s work should indeed be seen as pre-cursor to this tradition: it could be called *The Geography of Famine*. This would not be a *better* translation, but it would be a different one, and, in Lawrence Venuti’s terms, a ‘relevant’ one⁶⁴. That Castro’s work has been translated as a ‘geography of hunger’ – a phrase with a particular kind of built-in polemical charge – has played a role in establishing his position in – or rather external to – (Anglophone) histories of the geographical study of *famine*. Nevertheless, in the interstices between languages we can see more clearly what Castro’s work seeks to achieve. It is precisely through *fome*’s capacity to register simultaneously experiential, bodily and phenomenological – ie, about *hunger* – and political, spatial, geographical and historical – ie about *famine* – that Castro’s work has much to offer contemporary geography. The slippages of translation also help to explain – although clearly do not totally explain – why he has largely been overlooked in the anglophone histories of hazards, drought and famine. ‘Few phenomena’, Castro argued, ‘have interfered so intensively in the political conduct of people as the alimentary phenomena, as the tragic necessity of eating; from this emerges the lively and cruel reality of a Geopolitics of Hunger’⁶⁵. For Castro, the continuum between humans and nature mediated through the body’s need to eat is a key driver of political organization and territorialization. This is the ‘spatial reality’ of the geography of hunger: not a determinist understanding of state form, but food as a vector by which the

⁶² Castro, *Geografia da Fome*, 1:17.

⁶³ See also Watts, ‘On the Poverty of Theory’.

⁶⁴ Venuti, ‘Translating Derrida on Translation: Relevance and Disciplinary Resistance’.

⁶⁵ Castro, *Geopolítica da Fome: Ensaio sobre os Problemas de Alimentação e de População do Mundo*, 1:19.

metabolic relation of humans and nature contribute to the construction and contestation of territory. We can see here a germ of Milton Santos' work, and his conceptual innovation of 'used territory'⁶⁶.

If hunger – *fome* – in Castro's work is associated with territory and space, also directly connected with the body is *alimentação*. The translation of this Portuguese word – or the French *alimentation*⁶⁷ – into English is somewhat vexing. 'Alimentation', in its Oxford English Dictionary sense – 'the action or process of being nourished by or of ingesting and digesting food; the action or process of providing food or nutrients; nourishment; nutrition'⁶⁸ – gets exactly to the emphasis on praxis and process which underpins what we can learn from Castro's geographical approach to hunger, food, and famine. Yet 'alimentation' is relatively rare and technocratic in English⁶⁹ and 'the geography of alimentation', 'alimentary geography', or 'nutritional geography', are all useful but compromised by being inadequately visceral, both literally and politically. In one of Castro's manuscripts a translation of the 'geography of nutrition' is proposed but discarded⁷⁰. The English alternative 'feeding' loses the nutritional and somatic qualities of '*alimentação*', as well as the agential, political and social dimensions of the geography of hunger. Translating '*alimentação*' is a subjective, literary judgement which has practical and theoretical significance. Castro deploys the word extensively, including in titles such as: *Alimentação e Raça* [Diet and Race] and *A Alimentação Brasileira a Luz da Geografia Humana* [A Human Geography of the Brazilian Diet]. He uses the term '*alimentação*' alongside and distinct from both '*fome*' and '*nutrição*'. Yet *alimentação* emphasizes that side of hunger and humanism which Chapter One drew out: that feeding is a bodily process which takes place between people, inside structures of social, spatial and political relations. This returns us again to the intellectual and methodological depth behind Castro's geography of hunger which has been lost in the (non-)translation of his work in English. The processual quality of '*alimentação*' gets to the metabolic, rather than just the somatic. The difference between a geography of '*alimentação*' to one of 'food' is essential: as outlined in Chapter One Castro's thinking starts from negativity and lack, not from surfeit. In terms of translation, then, perhaps 'metabolic', in the current context of political ecology, is more helpful than 'alimentary'⁷¹. In any case, studying the necessary twists and turns of translation lets us detail the object

⁶⁶ Melgaço and Prouse, 'Milton Santos and the Centrality of the Periphery'.

⁶⁷ For the distinction between these see Monbeig, 'Au Brésil'.

⁶⁸ 'Alimentation, n.1'.

⁶⁹ The OED puts 'alimentation' in 'Band 4' of their Frequency Usage register, indicating that it 'occur[s] between 0.1 and 1.0 times per million words in typical modern English usage. Such words are marked by much greater specificity and a wider range of register, regionality, and subject domain than those found in bands 8-5.' 'Hunger', for instance is in Band 6, which 'contains words which occur between 10 and 100 times per million words in typical modern English usage, including a wide range of descriptive vocabulary'. Portuguese and French equivalent dictionaries unfortunately don't provide equivalent metrics.

⁷⁰ Castro, 'Geografia Da Fome Translation Manuscripts'.

⁷¹ Davies, 'Unwrapping the Oxo Cube: Josué de Castro and the Intellectual History of Metabolism'.

of Castro's enquiry: not just the spatial distribution or quality of food, but the spatial, social, political and economic processes by which people come to eat, or are made hungry.

Very late in life Castro wrote a piece in Spanish calling for more research on the connection between environment and development. He reflects on the Spanish term '*medio ambiente*', usually translated into English as 'environment'. Apologising for what he says is his poor grasp of Spanish, he notes that Spanish doesn't have a word for what in French is '*environnement*'. He likes '*environnement*' because, unlike *medio ambiente*, it 'includes man, who should be seen within the general context of the whole'⁷². The Spanish reads: '*porque incluye al hombre que se encuentra dentro del contexto general del conjunto*'. Translating this sentence is itself complex. '*Conjunto*' does not have an easy translation into English. It derives from *con+junto* – with+together – and suggests set, ensemble and context. The relationship between '*contexto general*' and '*conjunto*' is less hierarchical than the English words 'general context' and 'whole' suggest. My own choice of translation is embedded in an interpretation of Castro's work which actively places it within a broader field of ecological thinking that understands man to be part of nature, not dominant over it. Yet this also potentially counteracts alternative interpretations of some of Castro's own earlier formulations, which at times had a productivist bent towards increasing food production that occasionally manifested in a discourse of dominating wild nature⁷³. As his thinking moved towards the environmental, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, Castro himself struggled with translation in order to express his changing ideas. In a preface to the Brazilian edition of *Geopolítica da Fome*, Castro used the phrase, '*o solo ambiente*' (literally 'the soil environment')⁷⁴. The phrase suggests a conception of the environment which prioritizes the soil as the determining feature of the relationship between nature and man. However, translating this into English loses some of the earthy textures of Castro's phrase. Again, these are subjective, interpretative choices: how these texts and words are translated emerges from a diachronic understanding of how Castro's thought developed. To think with Castro's work, therefore, it is most productive if we refute the two-sided coin of both direct and a-political translation and moments of absolute impossibility of translation, and instead engage creatively in the productive field of translation itself.

D. Geographies of Reception

In arguing that the travels of the geography of hunger can yield important conclusions for the conceptualization of the history of geography, and open new avenues for geographical theory, I have so far analysed questions of publication and translation. I turn, now, to reception. Castro's ideas traversed places, from pages to fields, farms and factories, and from the Military Club of Rio de Janeiro

⁷² Castro, 'Desarrollo, Ecología, Desarme y Descolonización', 18.

⁷³ Castro, *Geography of Hunger*, 13; Eg Castro, *Geografia Da Fome: O Dilema Brasileiro: Pão Ou Açúcar*, 102.

⁷⁴ Castro, *Geopolítica da Fome: Ensaio sobre os Problemas de Alimentação e de População do Mundo*. p.27

to St Paul's cathedral and Fanon's Algeria. His personal archive affords an analysis of the hundreds of newspaper clippings of reviews, comments, op-eds and news articles which responded to his writing. Here I want to treat *Geografia da Fome* and *Geopolítica da Fome* together as an extended contribution in two parts, or two volumes, as Castro often did. Milton Santos wrote in 2001 that the insight of the former underpinned the latter which then became the 'site and inspiration for a great world debate about international injustices'⁷⁵. To explore the geography of that 'great debate' I want to understand the reception of Castro's work across contested national space, through academic disciplines, international politics and anti-colonialism. Castro was fascinated by the reception of his books and maintained a correspondence with his publishers asking that they retain copies of all reviews of his work⁷⁶. The reviews of Castro's work in Brazil reveal him as a significant national intellectual. I will return to this question in Chapter Five, but his books elicited significant public debate, at least among the elite. However, figuring reception through the national scale is very partial. National and international receptions affected one another. In Brazil itself reception was geographically divided, but its dominant fault lines were political, not geographical. Nevertheless, as Keighren argues, 'whilst location [does] not always *determine* how [...] [texts are] read, it [does] *facilitate* certain types of engagement'⁷⁷.

There is a material continuity between publication and reception. Studying the history of Castro's books makes this feedback clear: all later editions include on their dust sheets and inside flaps quotations from reviews of earlier work. The third Brazilian edition, for instance, has the back cover '*A Crítica Mundial Aplaude a "Geografia da Fome"*' [World Criticism applauds the *Geography of Hunger*]. This is, of course, entirely common. Yet it is worth noting for the oscillation it evidences between author and critics. Castro considered the book to be in active conversation with its reviewers. In the second edition he published a response to the national press, citing articles which he found useful in developing his critique, and articulating points of disagreement with reviewers⁷⁸. The breadth of opinion and comment, from the hagiographic to the vitriolic, shows that analysing hunger touched moral, political and philosophical nerves in Brazil⁷⁹. Indeed, as I outlined in Chapter One, *Geografia da Fome* marked Castro's move into a fundamentally critical attitude towards Brazilian social reality. Where before a somewhat descriptive tenor had at times pertained, by 1946 Castro was directing a critique at the heart

⁷⁵ Santos, 'Josué de Castro e a Geografia Da Fome', 22.

⁷⁶ Castro, 'To Victor Gollancz'.

⁷⁷ Keighren, *Bringing Geography to Book*, 4:88.

⁷⁸ This appendix is also published in *Géographie de la Faim*, evidencing the close interconnections between French and Brazilian academic traditions. Castro also refers to the fact that he is working on a renewed investigation of hunger in hispanic-american revolutions at the behest of Roger Bastide who he calls 'french-brazilian, 'because few of our compatriots are identified and penetrated by the Brazilian spirit so much as Roger Bastide' Appendix Castro, *Géographie de la faim*.

⁷⁹ Formally, the response in the press was extremely varied, from lengthy discussions, such as the seven part series of articles published by Frederic Schwes in the *Diário de Carioco* in the first months of 1954, through to brief announcements, cartoons, captioned photographs of book signings, and formal reviews.

of Brazilian society⁸⁰. Controversy, and ire from the right, centred on the role of the *latifúndia*, and the reaction of the landowning elites was one of horror⁸¹. The books ultimately helped lead Castro into political exile when his civil and political rights were cut off in April 1964. Indeed, as the diplomat José Constâncio de Athayde wrote in 1997, this reaction was both immediate and long-lasting: ‘the plutocracy united with the most reactionary elements in the country and decreed the civil death of the writer who would still go on to write *Geopolitics of Hunger*’⁸². This civil death even led to the withdrawal of Castro’s work from universities and libraries⁸³. The oscillation between celebration and erasure is one of the curiosities of working on Castro’s legacy.

Reading the reception of Castro’s books, it is important not to draw too thick a line between his writing and other forms of praxis.

Gramsci’s notion of the intellectual, which I will return to in Chapter Five, helps us fracture a simplistic understanding of intellectual work as not just book learning and writing, but much broader forms of practice. A dialectical mode of interpretation between text and action is necessary.

If we are to appreciate the

radical charge of the work – its ability to get to the roots of things – we should place it both in the political contexts in which it was written and those in which it was read. We can see how Castro’s books were influential beyond the elite if we read them as intimately connected to his political practice⁸⁴. In rural contexts of high illiteracy, vast distances and only incipient political organization, evidence for such impact is of course partial, but we can point to a number of threads. The first is the connection between Castro and the Northeast’s *Ligas Camponesas*, the Peasant Leagues. He made practical contributions and was involved in some of the most significant moments of the Peasant Leagues’ political existence, as discussed further in Chapter Four. By the 1960s Castro was cautious about the



Figure 17: Josué de Castro (with microphone) at the Engenho Galiléia near Recife, during the campaign for its appropriation, 5th June 1960. Alongside him is Francisco Julião. Source: Arquivo DP/D.A. Press. Brasil

⁸⁰ See Carvalho, ‘Josué de Castro Na Perspectiva Da Geografia Brasileira-1934-1956’; Magalhães, *Fome: uma (re)leitura de Josué de Castro* [*Hunger: a (re)reading of Josué de Castro*].

⁸¹ Eg Carvalho, ‘Latifúndios e Minifúndios’.

⁸² Athayde, ‘Problemas Fundiários [Basic Problems]’.

⁸³ Guimarães, ‘Darcy Ribeiro: 1923-1997’.

⁸⁴ Bizzo, ‘Ação política’.

achievements and radicalism of the Peasant Leagues⁸⁵, but he has for decades since been lauded by leaders of rural movements⁸⁶. At the time, Castro's work on the geography of hunger was disseminated among Peasant Leagues. Francisco Julião, for instance, wrote a *cordel* poem (a popular form passed through troubadours) called '*Josué nosso profeta*': 'Josué our prophet' in response to *Geografia da Fome*.

Hunger was central to the politicization of the rural masses, and Castro was an important figure in the politics of hunger and agrarian reform in Brazil⁸⁷. Castro straddled the worlds of parliamentary legislation, intellectual debate and – to a lesser extent – mass politics. This expands the spatiality of reception into rural space. The photograph in Figure 17 of Josué de Castro speaking at the Peasant Leagues' first ever land occupation, at Engenho Galliléia, is thus not merely illustrative: it shows Castro – the intellectual – disseminating his ideas in a politicized rural space. This spatial crossing of borders from the rural to the urban is intrinsic to the interpretative frame of the geography of hunger itself. Like so much other important geographical work – from Antonio Gramsci, William Cronon, Raymond Williams and Doreen Massey – Castro saw rural and urban places as deeply interconnected. His understanding of the geography of hunger was necessarily about connecting spaces of (non-/) consumption and spaces of (non-/) production in a single frame of analysis: the geography of hunger. As Chapter Two has shown, Castro was also an urban thinker and throughout his career was associated with union and student interests⁸⁸. In Recife, the dock workers founded the first union in the Northeast and were a significant political force from the 1920s through to the 1960s⁸⁹; Castro had longstanding relationships with both the Pernambuco Dock Workers' Union, and Dock Workers in the state of São Paulo⁹⁰. The spread of Castro's ideas in Brazil happened not only through his books' own travels, his personal relations and reputation among the country's elites, but through a broad sweep of day-to-day engagement with political parties, urban workers, peasant organizations, and the student movement.

A key tenet of the Brazilian critical response was that Castro's books were rapturously received in the international sphere. This is a dynamic Innes Keighren also notes in his analysis of Ellen Semple's reception⁹¹. Castro's archives demonstrate assiduous attempts to gain allies and strengthen ties among

⁸⁵ Castro, *Death in the Northeast*.

⁸⁶ Stédile, *A questão agrária no Brasil*; Clodomir, 'Josué de Castro: Brasileiro e Cidadão Do Mundo [Josué de Castro: Brazilian and Citizen of the World]'; Tandler, *Josué de Castro - Cidadão do Mundo*.

⁸⁷ Castro, *Semeador de Ideias*, 35–37; For a discussion of later Brazilian agrarian reforms see eg Pereira, 'Brazil's Agrarian Reform'.

⁸⁸ Melo and Neves, *Josué de Castro*, 93, 99–100 As a parliamentarian he was a key ally for student organizations, for instance promoting student positions in 1957, defending the student strike in Pernambuco in 1958 in the National Congress, and aligning himself with students and unions in August 1961 in defence of the constitution.

⁸⁹ Barros, *A década 20*.

⁹⁰ See for example Fundaj.CEHIBRA.492; Fundaj.CEHIBRA.179. 12th August 1958.

⁹¹ Keighren, *Bringing Geography to Book*, 4:90.

sympathetic readers. He proactively pursued translation projects as widely as possible, worrying over details of Lithuanian, Yugoslav, Japanese, Chinese, German, Swedish and other editions⁹². Positive international reviews were translated in Brazilian newspapers, including reviews originally published in *Le Monde* in Paris, and *Pravda* in Moscow⁹³. Reviews regularly trumpeted the growing number of translations of the book and argued that Castro's status was good for Brazilian national pride and helped promote Brazilian Portuguese as a language for intellectual advancement.

Nevertheless, the international response was, in fact, quite uneven. The English response to *The Geography of Hunger* in the early 1950s was, in particular, muted. Some reviews were downright dismissive: 'confronted [...] by exaggerations and mis-statements that border on the grotesque, the reader is inclined not only to dismiss the book as nonsense, but to dismiss also from his mind the very real problems with which it is concerned'⁹⁴. The reviewer, EGR Taylor, lands on the definition of hunger: 'does "hunger" in this sense [of lack of nutrients] demand to be described in intemperate language?'⁹⁵ His review is, enlightening with regards the lack, in the anglophone sphere, of a contextual sense of Castro's broader work. Taylor launches a critique on the basis of Castro's inadequately geographical understanding of diet, arguing that he ignores the importance of local food stuffs, and suggests that Castro wants a 'world-wide distribution of dried milk and eggs'⁹⁶. A general knowledge – even a glance at the titles, as enabled by the French edition of the *Géographie de la Faim* in 1949 – of Castro's earlier work would show this to be a misreading. Castro's years of efforts to valorize the nutritional benefits of little appreciated wild food stuffs in the Northeast of Brazil⁹⁷, for example, are obviously beyond the scope of Taylor's knowledge. The source of Taylor's ire becomes clearer, however, when he attacks Castro's emphasis on imperialism. Nevertheless, Taylor concludes oddly, '[if] we discount Dr de Castro's attitudes and opinions, and substitute such words as "deficiency," and "malnutrition" for the more sensational ones that he loves to employ, the book is worth reading'⁹⁸. Taylor was not alone in his irritation with Castro. Paul Russell, an American scientist, noted in his diary that he found in Castro's work 'bad logic, false biology, historical dishonesty, self-righteousness, and even malice [...he] has a touch of hysteria in his blood'⁹⁹. The reference to 'historical dishonesty' and

⁹² Castro, 'To Sanford Greenburger (Various)'.

⁹³ Niedergang's review was republished in *Diário de Notícias*, and the editor of *Pravda*'s review was in *Folha da Manhã* on 6th June 1955. A review by a North American professor, Earl Parker Hanson, review, was also translated and published, as was Joyce Butler's 'O colonialismo cria a fome'. Fundaj.CEHIBRA.6. See also *Noite Ilustrada*. 29th April 1952. 'Josué de Castro e a Crítica Inglesa'

⁹⁴ Taylor, 'An Under-Nourished World'.

⁹⁵ Taylor, 349.

⁹⁶ Taylor, 350.

⁹⁷ Castro et al., 'Alimentos Bárbaros'.

⁹⁸ Taylor, 'An Under-Nourished World', 350.

⁹⁹ Cited in Litsios, 'Popular Education and Participation in Malaria Control', 92.

hysteria is, I think, code for Castro's critique of colonialism and imperialism. As readers, Taylor and Russell crystallize a central tenet of the reception of Castro – that his geography of hunger is too political to be scientific; too political to be 'true'.

It is important to place all of this in the context of Castro's contemporary work at the FAO. In 1952, as *The Geography of Hunger* was being published, Castro found himself in a problematic position. The FAO was coming under pressure because, as the President of the Executive Council, the book's political message was seen as constituting a reputational risk for the organization. The Director General of the FAO, Norris Dodd, and his deputy Herbert Broadley, were berated by William Vogt, the influential Malthusian population scientist, via his pressure group, The Population Reference Bureau, for associating with Castro¹⁰⁰. Herbert Broadley tersely defended both the FAO and Castro from Vogt's critiques, and also insisted that the two could not be elided. Castro himself defended his right to publish the book, but was concerned that the dispute could undermine his diplomatic projects. He wrote increasingly urgent letters to his US agent to organize ways to reassure the FAO and attempted to distance his official role from his writing¹⁰¹.

Castro was highly self-conscious of the way in which his published work connected, and at times clashed, with his professional and political activities. In the preface to the second French edition of *Géopolitique de la Faim* Castro argued that 'the understanding and tolerance of criticism which the book has received – in response to its at times challenging perspectives and harsh accusations – seem to be precursors of a new era of better understanding between peoples'¹⁰². This is perhaps a somewhat vainglorious tone, but Castro, as a Brazilian and a diplomat, felt himself able to straddle the iron curtain. Throughout his political career in Brazil he had to resist characterizations of himself as a communist and a stooge of Soviet Russia. He never was such a thing, but the virulent, violent anti-communist Brazilian right picked him as one of their targets of loathing (Figure 18). He had friends and associates who were nationally and regionally significant communists – Luis Carlos Prestes and Caio Prado Júnior, for instance – but Castro resisted the Brazilian party's dogmatism, which never suited the independent

¹⁰⁰ Broadley, 'To and From Population Bureau, Washington'.

¹⁰¹ Castro, 'Letters to Herbert Broadley'; Castro, 'Letters to Sanford Greenburger'.

¹⁰² Preface in Castro, *Geopolitique de la faim*.

cast of his own mind. One tradition in which we could place him, I think, is rather that of what he himself called, speaking about his friend Dom Helder Câmara, the progressive, ‘non-conformist Latin American spirit’¹⁰³, determined to disrupt the oligarchies, and defined intellectually by a practiced solidarity with the axis of Brazilian progressivism of the 20th century: the alliance between rural peasants and the urban working classes. Castro saw the geography and geopolitics of hunger as a radical critique of existing power structures and a universalist, humanist programme relevant not only to both the USSR and the West, but to the Third World. He wrote with both audiences in mind, and his work was received warmly on both sides of the intellectual fractures of the cold war.

The geography and geopolitics of hunger sometimes operated as flexible ciphers for their readers’ pre-existing political commitments. However, they could not carry all opinion: internationally, two positions were consistent: they outraged Malthusians, and irritated imperialists. Castro’s books

were received and interpreted among mid-century left-wing British parliamentarians and in the second edition of *Geopolítica da Fome* he wrote about exchanges with British parliamentarians in June of 1952, saying in particular that he used the book as a catalyst to muster agreement in the UK for an international food reserve¹⁰⁴. Evidence for Castro’s influence on British domestic politics is minimal, but his long-standing involvement in welfare politics in Brazil provides an interesting context for exchanges with crucial figures in the emergence of the welfare state and the National Health Service in the UK. Castro described, in English, these interlocutors’ ‘fair play’: ‘what surprised me – and I am very confused

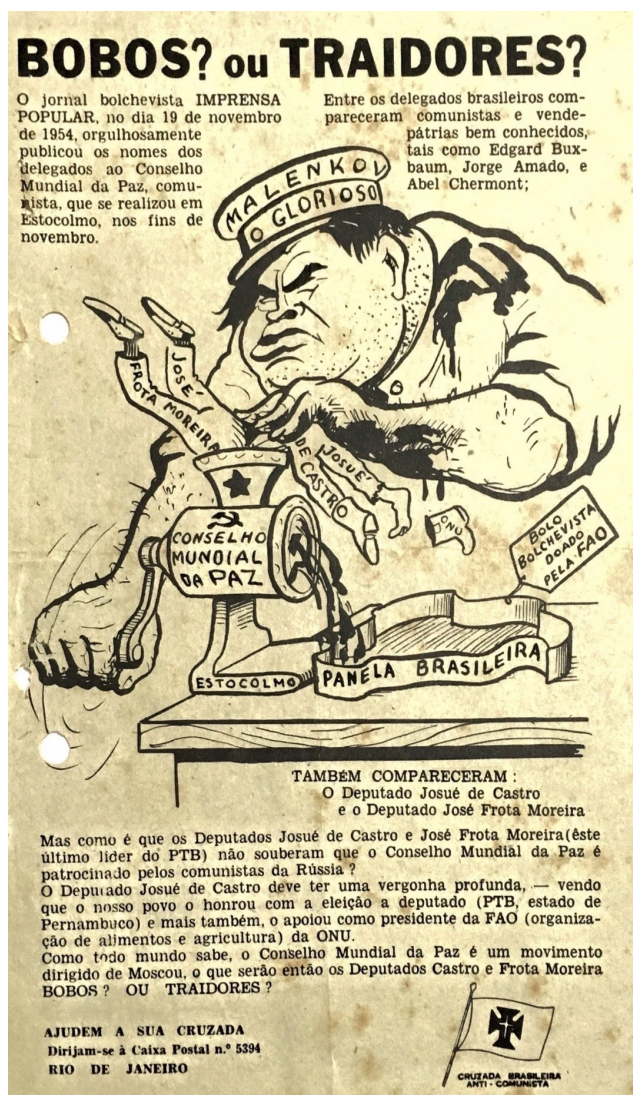


Figure 18: ‘Idiots? Or Traitors?’. Anti-Communist cartoon of Josué de Castro in Brazilian Anti-Communist Brigade Pamphlet, 1955. Note the characterization of the FAO as ‘Bolshevist’ and the World Peace Prize as Soviet. Source: CEHIBRA

¹⁰³ Rosembuj, ‘Josué de Castro: las dudas de un pacifista [Josué de Castro, the doubts of a pacifist]’.

¹⁰⁴ Preface in Castro, *Geopolítica da Fome: Ensaio sobre os Problemas de Alimentação e de População do Mundo*.

about it, was that I was very unfriendly with the British and they have been very friendly with me. They have been gentlemen as far as the book is concerned'¹⁰⁵. His correspondence shows a warm personal relationship with Gilbert McAllister, Richard Acland, Aneurin Bevan and Gilbert McAllister. All of them nominated him for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1963¹⁰⁶. His nomination was seriously considered, and a dossier was prepared on his candidature¹⁰⁷. Castro was in fact nominated for the prize a number of times, including in 1953 by the Soil Association, indicating his long history of entanglement with ecological concerns and institutions¹⁰⁸. In 1963 the figures to publically endorse him included the eclectic combination of the French priests Joseph Lebreton and Abbé Pierre, the British communist scientist JD Bernal and the Pakistani pacifist Ahmed Jaffar¹⁰⁹. In the end, however, he never received the prize.

While he engaged with British politicians, he was less actively part of academic discourse in the United Kingdom during his lifetime. Castro did make attempts to intervene in anglophone academic geography. After visiting the United States, he exchanged letters with the influential Michigan-based geographer Preston James¹¹⁰ in the late 1930s and early 1940s. James spent significant periods of time doing research in Brazil from the 1930s onwards¹¹¹, and it appears Castro assisted him during his trips. Indeed, Castro began a project of translating a book by James (presumably his 1935 *An Outline of Geography*), but what came of the project is unclear, and I have not been able to identify a published translation into Portuguese. James, on his part, encouraged Castro to attend the 1940 American Scientific Congress, and to give a paper there¹¹². Castro continued to attend later International Geographical Union (IGU) meetings, in Lisbon in 1949 and Washington in 1952, both while American Professor George Cressey was the President. It is difficult to say with precision the role that Castro took at the IGU meetings. André Mayer suggests that his ideas were influential in 1949¹¹³, when one of the outcomes of the congress was the much wider agreement to produce an inventory of world land use¹¹⁴. In 1952 Castro and Cressey debated aspects of a geography of hunger, food and agricultural production at the congress. Cressey was sceptical of some of Castro's connection between fertility and hunger, and about the specifics of Castro's cartographic approach, but he nevertheless invited the Brazilian to present a

¹⁰⁵ Gibson, 'This Week's Personality: Josué de Castro'.

¹⁰⁶ McAllister and Silkin, 'To The President, Nobel Committee'.

¹⁰⁷ Various, 'Nobel Prize Nomination Dossier: Josué de Castro'.

¹⁰⁸ Various.

¹⁰⁹ Anonymous, 'Genebra: Instituições Mundiais Lançam Pernambuco Josué Para o Nobel Da Paz'.

¹¹⁰ Martin, 'Preston E. James, 1899–1986'.

¹¹¹ James, 'The Sao Francisco Basin'; James, 'Patterns of Land Use in Northeast Brazil'.

¹¹² James, 'To Josué de Castro. From Department of Geography, Ann Arbor'.

¹¹³ André Mayer, Preface to First Edition Castro, *Géographie de la faim*.

¹¹⁴ Goblet, 'De La Géographie de La Faim a La Géographie de l'Alimentation'.

seminar on population at the Department of Geography at George Washington University¹¹⁵. During this period Castro was also a member of the Standing Expert Committee on Nutrition at the FAO, before being elected Chairman of the FAO Council in 1952¹¹⁶. He was, therefore, a conduit not only between American, French and Brazilian geography, but also (like his friend and interlocutor André Mayer) between the FAO and the IGU.

However, in spite of these early contacts, Castro's reception was relatively muted in anglophone geography, in particular in the UK. This was much less the case in demography. The book led to welcoming reviews¹¹⁷ assessments of the state of the debate¹¹⁸, and virulent attacks. 'This is one of those horrid twisted books...' began a review of *The Geography of Hunger* in *Eugenics Review* by G C L Bertram in 1952¹¹⁹. This would probably have rather pleased Josué; if there was one thing Castro could not stand, it was a Malthusian. The book came out at the peak of what Alison Bashford has called the United States' 'Malthusian moment'¹²⁰. At the time perhaps the leading Malthusian with whom Castro locked horns was William Vogt. Oswald de Andrade, in a review of *Geopolítica da Fome* in the early 1950s put the controversy down to the connections between neo-Malthusianism and US Imperialism¹²¹, and Eric Carter has recently placed Castro's work in the centre of wider Latin American resistance to Malthusianism¹²². Carter places Latin American discourses on demography in the context of an intellectual history in English often focussed on the United States. Eve Buckley, too, has recently put Castro's work into the context of ebbs and flows of population discourse in Latin America during the Cold War¹²³. It is important to place the response to Castro's work in demography within a broader anti-colonial and anti-imperialist political and intellectual movement which saw US-led, aid-based projects – including 'family planning' and even sterilization – as co-terminous with (neo-)colonialism¹²⁴. Castro's debates with Malthusians were the most fraught of all his intellectual contretemps. His own virulent anti-Malthusianism, as Maria José de Rezende argues, was driven by a

¹¹⁵ Cressey, 'To Josué de Castro'.

¹¹⁶ See papers in Various, 'Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Nutrition 1949: Manufacture of Synthetic Vitamins in Underdeveloped Nations'; Various, 'Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Nutrition: Report on the First Session'.

¹¹⁷ eg Hazari, 'Review: Josué de Castro: Geography of Hunger'.

¹¹⁸ eg Arqué, 'Le Monde Est-Il Menacé de Famine?'

¹¹⁹ Bertram, 'Geography of Hunger', 163.

¹²⁰ Bashford, *Global Population*, 277–80.

¹²¹ Andrade, 'A Atualidade Da Fome'.

¹²² Carter, 'Population Control'.

¹²³ Buckley, 'Overpopulation'.

¹²⁴ Captured for example by Sanjinés, *Yawar Mallku*.

fundamental political abhorrence for blaming the hungry for their own hunger¹²⁵. For Castro, Malthusianism was tied to political strategy and economic development.

Nevertheless, in terms of demography, Castro sometimes did himself no favours. Perhaps his most contentious argument was to revive a – strongly disputed¹²⁶ – 19th century theory of August Bebel that posited a biological connection between fertility and overpopulation. Specifically, that protein deficiency increases male fertility, and that malnutrition damages women's livers, affecting fertility. This reflected Castro's desire to reject Malthusianism in all its manifestations, but was ultimately a form of 'alimentary determinism'¹²⁷. In *Geography of Hunger* Castro also argues that hunger plays a role in creating phenomena as disparate as banditry, messianism and sexual behaviour. Some of this, too, has a ring of determinism. These were highly consequential political debates at the moment of the emergence of the international aid industry. He contested that true social and human development would render unnecessary drastic interventions in population control¹²⁸.

Castro's demography can also be seen in a Catholic context, and his connection with Catholic radicals both in Europe and in the Northeast were important to his campaigning work against hunger. Castro worked with the French priests Joseph Lebreton and Abbé Pierre with whom he shared an interest in the idea of the human economy¹²⁹, and was aligned with the reforming tendencies of the Catholic church in both Brazil and the Vatican. Lebreton's own views, though, were more problematic. His Economy and Humanism project – Castro published *Geopolitique de la Faim* through his publishing house of that name in France – has been accused of civilizational imperialism, seeking to retain French influence in new forms. Lebreton himself – along with the economist François Perroux, who also influenced Castro – have been linked to Vichy interests in the second World War and had a long history of anti-communist sentiments¹³⁰. It would be too straightforward to simply place Castro in this tradition, but the overlaps between his career and Lebreton's are certainly worthy of further study. Castro sought audiences with the Pope John XXIII to support his campaigns against hunger, and praised him as a reformer committed to fighting hunger, particularly in relation to the Papal encyclical '*mater et magister*'¹³¹. Castro also had a warm relationship with the radical bishop Dom Helder Câmara¹³², who became an important figure

¹²⁵ Rezende, 'Colonialismo, subdesenvolvimento e fome em Josué de Castro', 229–30.

¹²⁶ Zwane, 'Overpopulation and Economic Growth in the Developing Countries'; Beal and Ervin, 'The Geography of Malnutrition', 50–51; Lacoste, *Géographie Du Sous-Développement*, 121–23.

¹²⁷ Toole, 'Review: The Geography of Hunger by Josué de Castro'; See also Melamid, 'Reviewed Works: Land for Tomorrow: The Unverdeveloped World, by L Dudley Stamp; The Geography of Hunger by Josué de Castro, Lord Boyd-Orr'.

¹²⁸ Anonymous, 'Josué Sustenta Em Paris: Desenvolvimento Racional Eliminará a Fome e a Subnutrição'.

¹²⁹ See for example Castro, *Geography of Hunger*, 18–19.

¹³⁰ Chamedes, 'The Catholic Origins of Economic Development after World War II'.

¹³¹ Castro, 'Speech to the Commission on External Relations in the Senate in Brasília'.

¹³² Castro, 'To Dom Helder Câmara'.

in the Brazilian left, and picked up the baton of Castro's fight against hunger. Just as Castro was being exiled, Dom Helder became archbishop of Recife. Like Castro, he suffered the wrath of the right and the landed interests, becoming the victim of death threats and assassination attempts. From exile, Castro praised Dom Helder's ongoing struggle in the Northeast against the 'horror' of hunger, poverty and anti-democrat government¹³³. From the 1960s to the 1990s, in particular after Castro's death in 1973, alongside Betinho, Dom Helder was one of the most important proponents of a radical discourse of hunger in Brazil. 'When I give food to the poor,' he wrote, 'they call me a saint. When I ask why they are hungry they call me a communist'¹³⁴.

Castro's engagement with demography, then, was variegated, but its most important contour was anti-colonialist and anti-imperialist. Indeed, if Castro's position in relation to capitalism was ambivalent, his voice as an anti-colonial and anti-imperialist activist was clear. Much more will be said on anti-colonialism, but what is relevant here is that the geography of hunger became part of the intellectual armoury of anti-colonial thought in the 1960s and 70s. He published, for instance, in the third edition of *Tricontinental* magazine launched following the seminal anti-colonial conference in Havana in 1966¹³⁵. He corresponded with the Organization for Solidarity with the People's of Africa, Asia and Latin America (OSPAAL)¹³⁶, and received newspapers from Cuba into the early 1970s. As Milton Santos wrote in 2001, thanks to Castro 'the discussion of the roots of the Third World gained new and decisive arguments', and at a time in which anti-colonial solidarity was vital and growing, the theses of Josué de Castro 'gained followers on all continents'¹³⁷.

Anti-colonial writers and film-makers used the spatial-ecological dynamics of the geography of hunger at significant junctures in their intellectual analysis of colonial oppression. This is to see how the idea of the geography of hunger functioned, as Adam David Morton put it, as 'an alternative mode of "transgressive theory" [which] offers the potential to connect actively to different locales, sites, situations without becoming overgeneralizing or transhistorical'¹³⁸. Walter Rodney used Castro's *Geography of Hunger* as an empirical and historical source for colonialism's deleterious effect on African people's physical and mental well-being¹³⁹. Paulo Freire, in a very different way, used the idea to describe a childhood similar to Castro's own: a geography of hunger articulating his own hungry

¹³³ Castro, *Sete palmas*, 13.

¹³⁴ Rocha, *Helder, o dom*, 53.

¹³⁵ Castro, 'Significance'.

¹³⁶ Castro, 'Letters to OSPAAL: From Josué de Castro'.

¹³⁷ Santos, 'Josué de Castro e a Geografia Da Fome', 22.

¹³⁸ Morton, 'Traveling with Gramsci: The Spatiality of Passive Revolution', 50.

¹³⁹ Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, 236.

home with the fertile fruit trees of his middle class neighbours in Recife¹⁴⁰. In the radical Argentine film *Hora de los Hornos* the geography of hunger is placed amid scenes of street fighting between police and revolutionaries, and used as a rallying cry for the revolutionary struggle against imperialism.

For Frantz Fanon, the geography of hunger defines the Manichean separation between the settler town and the native town. In *The Wretched of the Earth*, in an important passage drawn on recently by Nik Heynen in his demand for an anti-colonial, anti-racist ‘abolition ecology’¹⁴¹, he writes: ‘the settler’s town is a well fed town, an easygoing town’¹⁴²; its belly always full of good things. The settler’s town is a town of white people, of foreigners. [...] The native town is a hungry town, starved of bread, of meat, of shoes, of coal, of light’¹⁴³. Elsewhere he writes, ‘the mass of the people struggle against the same poverty, flounder about making the same gestures and with their shrunk bellies outline what has been called the geography of hunger’¹⁴⁴. Castro and Fanon met at least once¹⁴⁵, and towards the end of his life the Brazilian was interested in Fanon’s work, associating his own struggle against hunger with defending ‘the wretched of the earth’¹⁴⁶. The history of this exchange of references provides some additional philological and historical weight to the analysis in Chapter One. What matters above all is the work Castro’s concept did for Fanon, and for other anti-colonialist thinkers. Said contends that ‘the issue for Lukács was the primacy of consciousness in history; for Fanon, it is the primacy of geography in history, and then the primacy of history over consciousness and subjectivity’¹⁴⁷. Said – in an extension on his own conception of travelling theory – discusses how Fanon, in *The Wretched of the Earth*, deployed Lukács to examine the dialectic between colonizer and colonized. If, for Fanon, there is ‘primacy’ in ‘geography’, then it is significant that he gets his geography from Castro. We might in particular see the spatialities of uneven development which Fanon explores in the settler and native towns as influenced by the potentials of Castro’s geographical thinking about hunger. Indeed, this is less speculative than Said’s suggestion that Fanon is deploying Lukács: Fanon’s mobilization of Castro is concrete. Castro’s ‘combatant geography’, his geography of hunger, therefore, travelled to become a framework for one of the single most important parts of anti-colonial thinking.

¹⁴⁰ García, ‘Biografía Intelectual’, 30.

¹⁴¹ Heynen, ‘Urban Political Ecology II’, 840.

¹⁴² ‘Easygoing’ is a strange translation of Fanon’s “paresseuse”, which means lazy, implying that the settlers’ bellies are full but they did not produce the food themselves

¹⁴³ Fanon, *Les damnés de la terre*, 42–43.

¹⁴⁴ Fanon, 94.

¹⁴⁵ Jachec, ‘Léopold Sédar Senghor and the Cultures de l’Afrique Noire et de l’Occident (1960)’, 198.

¹⁴⁶ Castro, ‘Desarrollo, Ecología, Desarme y Descolonización’.

¹⁴⁷ Said, ‘Traveling Theory Reconsidered’, 446.

Conclusion

The history of geography can be enriched by attending to questions of publication, translation and reception. Castro's ideas moved and shifted. What they meant differed according to audiences and contexts. The Castro of the American and British press was not the same as that of the French, Brazilian or Pernambucan. The geography of hunger meant different things, and worked in different ways, in the well-heeled and well-fed halls of the UN and the British Parliament, in the hungry streets of the outskirts of Recife or amid the rebellious fervour of land occupations in the *agreste* beyond. The trajectory of these books' publication and reception have configured Castro's place in geographical thought. In Brazil, Castro's position as a figure of the left and a pioneer of Human Geography was enabled by an identifiable history of geographical, spatial and scientific analysis. His Brazilian public, and to a lesser extent his French public, have long had access to a Castro who was a doctor and geographer, but also an important figure in the political development of the Brazilian welfare state and arguments about national developmentalism. His *Geopolítica* was seen for what it was: an international excursion based on a long training in Brazilian political and social reality, and a deep exploration of the biosociological landscape of Brazilian hunger. To many of his anglophone recipients, however, Castro was either an international technocrat with powerful friends, or a rabid anti-imperialist. He was cast as both a relatively exotic and a relatively obscure, internationalist figure, cut loose from the political frictions that mark his Brazilian legacy. The emergence of the English version of *The Geography of Hunger*, without its cartographic, biosociological precursor, *Geografia da Fome*, compounds a reading of Castro as a liberal humanitarian, which runs counter to the critique of developmentalism¹⁴⁸, aid and imperialism which his anti-colonial readership found in his work.

The non-translation of *Geografia da Fome* is a central part of this story. The history of geography can be enriched by attending to questions of translation, both in terms of the linguistic practice, and in terms of the history of books. This analysis aims to add strings to the bows of travelling theory and situated knowledges, by placing translation and material histories of publication at their heart. My interpretation of the history of geographical ideas sees geographical thought as forms of situated knowledge produced by the dialectic relationship between the production and reception of knowledge, and between the gaps of languages. The importance of the geography of hunger is found not as a fixed moment of pure thought, but in its many contexts of location, locution and situation, and through its many lives in motion, and in translation. In this chapter, then, I have interpreted Castro's work by reading Said through Haraway, and Haraway through Said. If the geography of hunger is a travelling theory then it is one that travels through translation. If the geography of hunger is a form of situated knowledge, in all its messiness, then its situation is always on the move. It is as both situated and mobile that geographical enquiry can still use the geography of hunger today.

¹⁴⁸ For which see also Castro and Feio, *O drama do Terceiro Mundo*.

Chapter Four: Space, Politics and Nature in The Northeast, 1955-64

'Each place will have its science, because science is not universal, it is local, it is a science of the region'

Josué de Castro¹

'The whole of Brazil is one immense Northeast'

Francisco de Oliveira²

Introduction

Having followed Castro's work as it travelled its particular global itineraries, in this chapter I return again to the site of its origins: Recife, in the Northeast. I pick up after the period explored in Chapter Two, in the late 1950s and early 1960s. At that time Recife was a thriving hubbub of political and creative life, and in this chapter I listen to some of what was bubbling there³. While conducting archival research in Recife I was a visiting member of a research group at the *Universidade Federal de Pernambuco* (UFPE). The campus is inland and to the west of the centre of Recife, where the State archives lie, and between the neighbourhoods of Várzea and Apipucos, home of Gilberto Freyre and the *Fundação Joaquim Nabuco*, where I worked through Castro's papers. Friends at UFPE helped me find a studio flat in the neighbourhood of Iputinga, near the university. A few hundred metres from my flat in one direction, towards the university, was the tropical modernist brutalism of Glaucê Campello's headquarters for the *Superintendencia do Nordeste*, the powerful regional planning agency more commonly known as SUDENE⁴. Just past the seat of SUDENE is a radio mast of the University Radio station, whose '*Serviço de Extensão Cultural*' (Cultural Extension Service), a radio literacy project, was directed by a young Paulo Freire in the early 1960s, during the radical municipal experiments of

¹ Castro, 'Développement et Environnement', 28.

² Oliveira, *Elegia para uma Re(li)gião*, 14.

³ Oliveira, *Noiva da revolução/Elegia para uma re(li)gião* [Fiancée of the revolution / Elegy for a re(li)gion], 21–80.

⁴ Sudene was founded in 1959 but its massive concrete base was not completed until 1968. During my visit it had recently been re-designated as the home of a revitalized Sudene by Dilma Rousseff, but its future was uncertain after the coup and Jair Bolsonaro's election in 2018.

the government of Miguel Arraes⁵. In another direction, somewhere in Iputinga, was the unrecorded site where probably the very first Peasant League in Brazil was founded on the 3rd January 1946⁶. The leader of that group, José dos Prazeres, was to become a crucial figure in the appropriation of the Engenho Galiléia, working alongside Francisco Julião and Josué de Castro in pushing for agrarian reform in the Northeast.

Droughts reminded national governments of the existence of the Northeast, and in 1958 an aggressive dry-spell hit the region. Along with a constellation of regional and national political forces, it led the President, Juscelino Kubitschek, to declare the region a national priority. His solution was to create SUDENE. Headed by the charismatic young economist, Celso Furtado – who became one of the most significant Brazilian thinkers of the twentieth century and a key exponent of the structuralist branch of dependency theory – by 1959 SUDENE accrued massive, but nevertheless crucially limited, powers to influence the economic development of the Northeast. The SUDENE project can be seen as a scale-producing effort⁷ that attempted to integrate the Northeast into a newly conceived national polity and to overcome regional underdevelopment. The drought, and the politics of the Northeast which it threw into stark relief, brought to the forefront of national political consciousness the spatial, and specifically the regional, dynamics of economic development. The 1958 crisis helped trigger⁸ the end of the mode of infrastructural politics which novelist and journalist Antonio Callado influentially called the ‘industries of drought’⁹. This industry involved public expenditure on reservoir construction being captured by large landowners for private benefit, and further entrenching social relations¹⁰. The state provided food to migrants fleeing drought. But most of this aid was seized by large landowners who used it to get a cheap labour force at the state’s expense, employing what was essentially *corvée* labour to enhance the value of their own land by building reservoirs (a form of infrastructure construction recalling the Spanish Franco regime’s use of political prisoners to build reservoirs that Erik Swyngedouw described in 2007¹¹). As Josué de Castro put it, such reservoirs ‘serve for nothing more than to reflect the sky of the Northeast: the most futile of all futilities’¹². This was a form of hydro-statecraft¹³, in which the state was captured by a particular section of capital¹⁴: the *latifúndia* that Castro

⁵ Coelho, ‘Paulo Freire’.

⁶ Bastos, *As Ligas Camponesas*, 139.

⁷ Swyngedouw, ‘Technonatural Revolutions’, 11.

⁸ Hall, *Drought and Irrigation in North-East Brazil*, 7.

⁹ Callado, *Indústrias da seca*.

¹⁰ Chilcote, *Power and the Ruling Classes*.

¹¹ Swyngedouw, ‘Technonatural Revolutions’, 22–23.

¹² Castro and Furtado, Celso, ‘Operação Nordeste: Dois Nomes e Duas Opiniões’, 33.

¹³ Swyngedouw, ‘Modernity and Hybridity’; Meehan and Molden, ‘Political Ecologies of the State’.

¹⁴ Harvey, ‘The Marxian Theory of the State’.

had so long struggled against. We can see the state in the Northeast as a socio-ecological relation. It functioned through an infrastructural production of nature – spatially controlled irrigation – organized around the crises of droughts. As Swyngedouw put it, the “production of nature” is an integral part of a process of “producing scale”¹⁵.

This was a complex and contested process as, in the late 1950s Northeast, urban, regional, national and international forces were contesting with one another. The cold war pitted Pernambucan radicals in Recife and in the sugar plantations against the weight of North American cold war paranoia, covert operations and the politics of humanitarian aid. The US increasingly regarded the Northeast’s Peasant Leagues, and the radical municipal, and later regional, government of Miguel Arraes and the leftist coalition *Frente do Recife* [The Recife Front] – of which Castro was an early signatory¹⁶ – as a revolutionary threat¹⁷. As these tensions rose, the national developmentalist governments of Juscelino Kubitschek and João Goulart began to take seriously the prospect of a national programme of social and economic reform in the Northeast which would have major political, spatial and socio-natural consequences¹⁸. Central to these questions was the vexed space of the Northeast and the politics of nature which manifested in a desperate need for agrarian reform and its infrastructural politics of irrigation canals and reservoirs. In the late 1950s and early 1960s the Northeast was tense: its deeply entrenched plantation-owning rural élites, a nascent industrial sector and an export-focussed economy were increasingly being challenged by a long tradition of leftist political thought and organization, and a spreading rural radicalism. Miguel Arraes argued in 1972 that the political struggle in Brazil in this period, and particularly in the Northeast, can be understood as centrally a question of anti-imperialism: a struggle between a section of the bourgeoisie intent on lining up the Brazilian economy with foreign capital, particularly from the United States of America, and a section of the bourgeoisie in tenuous and often fractious alliance with workers and peasant movements¹⁹. In the end it was land reform that was the trigger for the rupture of April 1964. President João Goulart tried to ‘play both sides,’ announcing a radical, national, agrarian reform which he did not have the power to enact²⁰. It was this that precipitated the coup.

This is the political backdrop for the intellectual history this chapter investigates, of the idea of the underdeveloped region. I move between discussions of theory and practice, to place this intellectual

¹⁵ Swyngedouw, ‘Technonatural Revolutions’, 10.

¹⁶ Soares, *A Frente do Recife*

¹⁷ Soares, *A Frente do Recife*; Robock, ‘Brazil’s Developing Northeast : A Study of Regional Planning and Foreign Aid’.

¹⁸ For overviews of the history of the Northeast in the early 1960s see Pereira, *The End of the Peasantry*; Sarzynski, *Revolution in the Terra Do Sol*; Page, *The Revolution that Never Was*; Santiago, *Pernambuco em chamas*; Arraes, *Brazil: The People and the Power*, Kikendall, ‘Paulo Freire’

¹⁹ Arraes, *Brazil: The People and the Power*.

²⁰ Forman, ‘Disunity and Discontent’.

history in the context of histories of geographical thought. Dependency theory has long been a key tool for theorising the expansion of capital into and through the underdeveloped world²¹. Early dependency theorists worked in the context of the Northeast laid out above: Celso Furtado, Fernando Henrique Cardoso, Vânia Bambirra and Milton Santos were all at this time, in different ways, beginning to address the question of uneven regional development in the Northeast. David Slater argued that ‘the radical *dependencia* perspective of the 1960s and early 1970s cannot be separated either from the geopolitical impact of the Cuban Revolution, or from the perceived need on the part of critical Latin American intellectuals to confront and challenge the relevance of modernization theory at the periphery’²². I would argue, further, that the ‘radical *dependencia* perspective’ cannot be separated from the radical history of the Northeast. Slater recognized the influence of studies of Brazil – and of Josué de Castro – in his papers on the geography of underdevelopment in 1973 in *Antipode* and referred, in particular, to Castro’s work on the Northeast²³. The breadth of Latin American work on underdevelopment expanded after the Cuban revolution²⁴, but already in the 1950s, Castro and a Brazilian group of early *dependentistas* were developing and debating their ideas and attempting to put them into action at the scale of the region. Although more closely associated with the scales of the nation and the world system and the centre and periphery²⁵, in its early stages its Brazilian theorists developed their ideas in the context of a struggle over the question of the region. This chapter argues that attention to the region can help to fracture what David Featherstone has called the ‘unthinking centrality’ accorded to the nation-state ‘as the privileged arena for the construction of hegemonic and counterhegemonic politics’²⁶. Right in the middle of these machinations – intellectually and politically – was Josué de Castro.

Asked, in 1998, about how to approach drought in the Northeast of Brazil, the Bahian geographer Milton Santos replied: ‘the first thing is, this question is social, not natural. Once again, it’s Josué de Castro first, and then Celso Furtado’²⁷. Santos’ remark gives this chapter its structure and its narrative. Santos intriguingly figures Castro as a bridge between schools of thought with apparently very distinct intellectual histories: regional geography on Castro’s part, and underdevelopment and dependency theory on Furtado’s. As Kevin Carter has recently written, and as Milton Santos²⁸, Enrique Leff and

²¹ Slater, ‘Geography and Underdevelopment’; Slater, ‘Geography and Underdevelopment—Part Ii*’.

²² Slater, ‘The Geopolitical Imagination and the Enframing of Development Theory’, 422.

²³ Slater, ‘Geography and Underdevelopment’, 23.

²⁴ Love, ‘Raul Prébisch and the Origins of the Doctrine of Unequal Exchange’.

²⁵ Makki, ‘Reframing Development Theory’.

²⁶ Featherstone, ‘“Gramsci in Action”: Space, Politics, and the Making of Solidarities’, 66.

²⁷ Santos, ‘Entrevista explosiva’.

²⁸ Tandler, Josué de Castro - Cidadão do Mundo.

Carlos Walter Porto Gonçalves²⁹ and Manuel Correia de Andrade³⁰ have longer argued, Castro was an important influence on geographical thinking about underdevelopment in the second half of the twentieth century. Carter's recent work has traced the history of Castro's (lost) legacy in terms of studies of population³¹. However, how exactly his influence can be felt not only in critical geography, but in studies of underdevelopment and dependency, remains under-determined.

After working at the FAO between 1951 and 1955 Castro returned to Brazilian politics full time, as a Federal Deputy for Pernambuco. By this time he was known as an expert on the politics of drought in the Northeast, as well as being involved in the national developmentalism of the Kubitschek government. In this chapter I analyse a debate between Castro and Furtado, in which the question of the political ecology of the region is central. Re-inserting Castro into a regional pre-history of dependency theory does two important things. Firstly, it animates dependency theory's scalar problematic by insisting that the question of the underdeveloped region was important to its intellectual history. Secondly, it insists on the ecological dimensions of underdevelopment and dependency theory, by articulating them with Castro's geography of hunger. How this question then plays out in later dependency theory, and in the history of (not only) Brazilian geographical thinking about space and the region, will be the subject of the next chapter.

I start from the premise that understanding the historical geography of Brazil in the middle of the twentieth century – or the historical geography of Recife, transatlantic trade relations, rural social movements, the reproduction of everyday life, or Latin American politics – all require confronting the question of the region. I attempt to 'be alive to the dynamic geographies of subaltern political activity and the generative character of political struggle'³² in order not to reify or fix the scale of the region, but to address its formation and function as a material and imagined space which had real political, social, cultural, economic and ecological effects. This is to see the region as both cause and effect. In anglophone geography the region has been declared dead and resuscitated more than once. So has regional political ecology. This in spite of the fact that the influential Blaikie and Brookfield, often cited as at the root of anglophone political ecology, in the 1980s explicitly had in mind a 'regional political ecology'³³. However, for a regional political ecology to be worth pursuing – indeed, Enrique Leff has recently reiterated the epistemological importance of the regional for the field³⁴ – what we mean by 'region' must be further explored.

²⁹ Porto-Gonçalves and Leff, 'Political Ecology in Latin America'.

³⁰ Andrade, 'Josué de Castro'.

³¹ Carter, 'Population Control'.

³² Featherstone, "'Gramsci in Action': Space, Politics, and the Making of Solidarities', 66.

³³ Walker, 'Reconsidering "Regional" Political Ecologies'.

³⁴ Leff, 'Power-Knowledge Relations in the Field of Political Ecology', 232–33.

Joel Wainwright, writing in the shadow of the death of Edward Said, asks ‘what precisely constitutes a “context” of, and for, political ecology? How does something come to be a space or region that calls for political ecology? How do we know where the context of our research lies? Is the inquiry into this knowledge itself part of doing political ecology?’³⁵. This chapter’s inquiry is oriented by such questions. A concept of the region for political ecology needs to be relational and open. It is a scale which is constantly the subject of struggle over its own constitution, extent and description. It needs to be both discursively and materially defined. It needs to be articulated with and distinguished from other great indeterminate terms of geography – place, territory and scale. It has something to do with an area of socio-cultural and political ecological identity, and the relationships between these two things. It is a product of natural history and political history. For contemporary political ecology to be regional, then, requires some further thought.

As in the last chapter, Said’s work helps establish and circumscribe these debates. Whilst the question of the region has been around as long as modern geography, *Orientalism*, Sidaway suggests, precipitated debates within geographical thought about ‘metageographical categories’³⁶, and the substantive role of ‘imaginative geographies’ in organizing space, nature and politics. In reopening the question of a regional political ecology I, after Wainwright, also hope to draw from and contribute to Gramscian approaches in political ecology. My contribution, in part, responds to Anssi Paasi’s blunt statement in 2011 that ‘the theoretical dialogue between English-speaking geographers and scholars working elsewhere over key spatial categories has largely disappeared’³⁷. What follows is an effort – necessarily highly selective – to reconstruct some of this missing dialogue. In this sense, Rogério Haesbaert’s work conceives ‘the region as an arte-fact (always with the hyphen), caught in the imbrication between fact and artifice and, as such, as a piece of political hardware’³⁸. Haesbaert is influenced by the regional thinking of both Milton Santos – whose ideas shifted significantly over his career³⁹ - and his post-doctoral mentor, Doreen Massey. In this chapter I put the notion of arte-fact to work to give order and form to the enormous proliferation of possible ways of thinking spatially and ecologically about the region. Haesbaert’s concept brings together discourse and representation with more materialist concerns around the production of space. In this chapter I will deal with both, always with the hyphen between them in place.

The chapter has three sections. I begin by outlining the stakes and content of Castro’s regional geography, picking up threads from the previous chapter to follow regional geography’s travels in the

³⁵ Wainwright, ‘The Geographies of Political Ecology’, 1034.

³⁶ Sidaway, ‘Geography, Globalization, and the Problematic of Area Studies’.

³⁷ Paasi, ‘From Region to Space’, 173.

³⁸ Haesbaert, ‘Região, regionalização e regionalidade’, 7.

³⁹ Castro, ‘A Região’.

Northeast of Brazil towards becoming a theory of regional underdevelopment. Doing so proposes an alternative history of regional geographic thought that goes far beyond its European instantiation. This research aims to demonstrate what Ferretti calls Castro's '(neglected) roles in shaping international scholarly and political debates'⁴⁰. In the second section, I turn to the intellectual history of the Northeast as a region in Brazil. I cannot do justice to the enormous breadth of such work, but I place Castro's work within a contested tradition of understanding the space, nature and politics of the Brazilian Northeast. Political struggle in the years leading up to 1964, in which Castro was heavily involved, attempted to bring a new Northeast into being through economic reform, agrarian mobilization and radical municipal politics.

In 2015 Innesfree McKinnon and Colleen Hiner, following Walker⁴¹ and Zimmerer⁴², reconsidered whether political ecology ought to be regional. They asked, 'should political ecologists participate as active agents in the construction and reconstruction of regions?' They answer a 'cautious "yes"'⁴³. Josué de Castro was much less cautious. It was precisely as a political ecologist – an activist scholar committed to analysing and disrupting the hierarchical, structural relations of power, colony and capital that configured social and ecological life in particular places – that he threw himself into the socio-political and economic production of the space and nature of the Northeast of Brazil. In the rest of this chapter I follow him doing so, in order to find new ways of thinking the region in political ecology.

A. Castro's Northeast: Regional Geography and the Geography of Hunger

Geografia da Fome was explicitly framed by the project of regional geography. In the 1930s, Marcus Power and James Sidaway suggest,

'an interest in regional geography was reinforced by the long crisis [...] and the attendant sociospatial disparities, codified as "regional problems" [...] and contrasted with "congestion" [...] as well as through the dissemination of Vidal de la Blache's (1845–1918) methodologies of regional synthesis, with their focus on national and regional questions in the metropole rather than the global (which meant colonial) frames of reference'⁴⁴.

Castro wrote his regional work against the backdrop of a very different geography and a particular form of regional uneven development. Following Power and Sidaway's logic we can suggest that his social

⁴⁰ Ferretti, 'Geographies of Internationalism', March 2018.

⁴¹ Walker, 'Reconsidering "Regional" Political Ecologies'.

⁴² Zimmerer, 'Wetland Production and Smallholder Persistence'.

⁴³ McKinnon and Hiner, 'Does the Region Still Have Relevance?' p.116

⁴⁴ Power and Sidaway, 'The Degeneration of Tropical Geography', 587.

context of regional uneven development made its way into his own regional geography. As Andrade argued, though, his geography was always heterodox⁴⁵: what his daughter Ana Maria called his ‘strange geography’⁴⁶. Nevertheless, Mateus Litwin Prestes has suggested that Castro’s rejuvenation of regional geography itself was his greatest contribution to the discipline⁴⁷.

Castro wrote that he wanted to deploy ‘not the descriptive method of the geography of the past, but the interpretative method of the modern science of geography, embodied by the rich intellectual work of Ritter, Humboldt, Jean Brunhes, Vidal de la Blache, Griffith Taylor and others’⁴⁸. We should note that Castro’s influences included regional geographers of different stripes, languages and backgrounds, exemplified by his intellectual exchanges with American regional geographers, in particular Preston James⁴⁹ and George Cressey⁵⁰. The Americans were themselves well aware of French-Brazilian networks: James reviewed Pierre Monbeig’s *Ensaio de Geografia Humana Brasileira* in 1942, describing the prominent French geographer (who had a much discussed influence on Brazilian Geography⁵¹) as ‘one of the most important contemporary writers on the human geography of Latin America’⁵². These flows complicate a straightforward narrative of French geography’s influence on Brazil. Nevertheless, having laid out this school of influence, Castro makes his movement beyond them clear. His is not a regional monograph in ‘strict terms [...] which would leave aside [the] biological, medical and public health aspects of the problem.’ Rather it is

‘always oriented by the fundamental principles of geographical science, [...] within these geographical principles, of localization, extension, causality, correlation and terrestrial unity that we will try to face the phenomenon of hunger. In other words, we will try to undertake an ecological overview, in the broad sense of “Ecology” as the study of the actions and reactions of living beings in relation to their environment’⁵³.

Castro’s early work addressed the tropics. Yet his tropical geography is very different from the determinist tenor of much Northern tropical geography. Castro was largely, perhaps overly, respectful of European geography, but we can see how far he diverged: for instance on the question of plantations, Castro’s analysis was different from that of, for instance, the influential French tropical geographer

⁴⁵ Andrade, ‘Josué de Castro e Uma Geografia Combatente’.

⁴⁶ Castro, *Semeador de Ideias*, 22.

⁴⁷ Prestes, ‘O Pensamento de Josué de Castro’.

⁴⁸ Castro, *Geografia da Fome*, 1:19.

⁴⁹ James, ‘To Josué de Castro. From Department of Geography, Ann Arbor’.

⁵⁰ Cressey, ‘To Josué de Castro’.

⁵¹ Andrade, ‘Pierre Monbeig e o Pensamento Geográfico No Brasil’; Silva, ‘The Hegemony of French Geography in Brazil’.

⁵² James, ‘Review of Ensaio de Geografia Humana Brasileira’, 338.

⁵³ Castro, *Geografia da Fome*, 1:19.

Pierre Gourou⁵⁴, who nevertheless is an important example of a thinker who began to outline, in French geography, some of the concerns of political ecology⁵⁵. As Chapter One explored, Castro took the tools of regional geography – its emphasis on area, place and modes of life – in order to deal with a new subject: hunger. This is a simple, but radical, manoeuvre. He displaced the neutrality of regional geography – its interest in regions for their own sake – and turned it to distinctively political ends. Elsewhere he describes this move as a turn from what he sees as the ‘positive’ concerns of geography – a set of descriptions and interpretations of man’s transformations of the surface of the earth – to a ‘negative,’ sceptical geography which sees the failure of society⁵⁶, and its transformations of nature, to reproduce life, health and sustenance. As in Chapter One, this negative move is again relevant here, as Castro sought to turn geography towards the service of oppressed groups, against the de-politicized geography of La Blache and the French regional school⁵⁷. We might redeploy the Gramscian cliché to see the optimism of Castro’s geographical method tempered by the pessimism of his geographical subject.

Castro’s theorization of the spatial production – the geography – of hunger, goes well beyond Vidalian regional geography of modes of life and the material specificities of local cultures⁵⁸. But the region remains important even as it is surpassed. *Geografia da Fome* moves according to regional logics, demarcating spatial areas with geographical features of diet, landscape and agriculture and correlating them with types and extents of hunger. This carries over from regional geography a conception of regions as relatively stable figurations which are knowable and examinable⁵⁹. But Castro’s thought moved on: twenty years later he made explicit that ‘society must be understood as a developing process, not as a set piece. I do not expect, nor would I wish, the social process to hold still while I photograph it’⁶⁰. This surpasses regional geography’s static view of the humanized landscape as a ‘medal struck in the image of a people’⁶¹. By the 1960s Castro remained short of conceptualising of the social production of space and nature but continued to develop an ‘ecological’ attention to the relationship between social processes and environmental transformation. I will explore Castro’s later work – his growing interests in relativity, knowledge and environmentalism – in the final chapter, but it is important that his grounding in regional geography, and his transformation of it, continued until his last years. Regional

⁵⁴ Power and Sidaway, ‘The Degeneration of Tropical Geography’, 592–93.

⁵⁵ Gautier and Hautdidier, ‘Connecting Political Ecology and French Geography: On Tropicality and Radical Thought’, 60–61.

⁵⁶ Castro, *Geography of Hunger*, 32.

⁵⁷ Andrade, *Poder*; Arruda, ‘The Geography of Hunger’.

⁵⁸ Jonas, ‘A New Regional Geography of Localities?’

⁵⁹ Wainwright, ‘The Geographies of Political Ecology’, 1035.

⁶⁰ Castro, *Death in the Northeast*, 4.

⁶¹ Cosgrove, ‘Towards a Radical Cultural Geography’, 2; Buttimer, ‘Geography, Humanism, and Global Concern’, 17.

geography in its Vidalian form is a single science to be applied to many places. Castro, in his later work was endorsing a quite different thing. In exploring the epistemology of science itself he held onto both the ecological and the regional, but proposed a reconstructed, regional, ‘ecology’ as a more situated, local structure of knowledge: ‘ecology is the science of the future [...] the science of the “eco,” of place [...] each place will have its science, because science is not universal, it is local, it is a science of the region’⁶². This constitutes a different connecting thread between the history of regional geography, and the history of political ecology.

Castro’s regional geography also met his geopolitics, in particular on the question of the state. Both Sauerian cultural ecology and regional geography contained limited theorizations of the state,⁶³ notwithstanding the long history of geographies of the state and state geographies in political geography and geopolitics⁶⁴. One of the important developments in Castro’s own thinking is his increasing attention to the state in the *Geopolitics of Hunger*. As Ferretti has noted, Castro used geopolitics in a different, critical way to its European inheritance⁶⁵. He wrote that his geopolitics ‘is not an art of the political struggle between states, neither is it a magic formula to predict History, as Spengler desired. It is merely a method for the interpretation of the dynamics of political phenomena in their spatial reality, with their roots sunk in the soil and environment’⁶⁶. By the early 1970s Castro’s work was explicitly addressing the state’s propagation of hunger: ‘in almost all countries of the world, governments represent particular dominant groups and frequently have no real interest in solving the problem of hunger’⁶⁷. In 1977 Monthly Review published an amended edition of *The Geopolitics of Hunger* based on a manuscript edited by Castro in 1973. It shows Castro’s changing approach. The words in square brackets are added by Castro in 1973:

‘Essentially, worldwide hunger is not a problem of production limited by the coercion of natural forces [but of a politics that is based essentially on economic and social inequality and on the premeditated division of the world into ruling and dominated groups. The rulers use hunger as a subtle and effective political instrument]’⁶⁸.

He did not fully develop this argument that hunger is a tool for propagating hegemony – in 1973 his health was failing fast – but he did add that ‘the nation’s hunger is also a consequence of the state’s inability to arbitrate private and public interests and, even more damaging, its ineptitude in protecting

⁶² Castro, ‘Développement et Environnement’, 28.

⁶³ Loftus, ‘Political Ecology II’.

⁶⁴ Farinelli, ‘Friedrich Ratzel and the Nature of (Political) Geography’.

⁶⁵ Ferretti, ‘Geographies of Internationalism’, March 2018.

⁶⁶ Castro, *Geopolítica da Fome: Ensaio sobre os Problemas de Alimentação e de População do Mundo*, 1:27.

⁶⁷ Castro, *The Geopolitics of Hunger*, 59.

⁶⁸ Castro, 63.

national interests from exploitation by foreign monopolies’⁶⁹. At that time – 1973, under the dictatorship – Castro argued that in Brazil there was an ‘excessive centralization’: ‘the government has never possessed an adequate understanding of how to use political power in the administration of such a vast territory’⁷⁰. How power over territory – over space and nature – played out in the region had long been a key problematic within Castro’s theory and praxis. The spatial dynamics of public versus private, centre versus periphery and national versus imperialist-monopolist played out through the infrastructural politics of the Northeast. Before moving onto these concerns, however, it is important to lay out the intellectual history of the Northeast.

B. The Intellectual History of a Contested Region

Throughout Castro’s life the Northeast cropped up as a formative subject, example and inspiration. His relationship with the place was simultaneously emotional, political and intellectual. He declared: ‘what I write, I owe to the Northeast’⁷¹. This meant he always stood – as EM Forster said of his sometime partner, the Greek modernist poet Constantine Cavafy – at a slight angle to the universe⁷². He was, like Antonio Gramsci, from the backwoods⁷³. In Pernambuco’s Legislative Assembly in 1958 he said:

‘I never forget that this is the place where I first formed a sense of life, that here I understood first the meaning of the world, in such a way that I never, however universal may be the pretension of my achievements, they are always, such as they are, marked by this sense of the earth, by something in essence regional’⁷⁴.

This recalls the deep specificity of Castro’s urban geography explored in Chapter Two. His writing about the Northeast was also very varied. From *Geografia da Fome*’s ecological exploration of Northeastern flora and fauna, habits of life, and diets, to his urban geography with its tropes of resistance and humanism, Castro’s thinking about hunger, space and nature is profoundly regional. Both his monograph on the city of Recife and his book on the conditions of the working classes in the city are deeply political reflections on the human geography of the Northeast. His two most explicit engagements were *Documentario do Nordeste* (1959), never published in English, and *Sete Palmas de Terra e Uma Caixão* (1965) published as *Death in the Northeast* in 1966. The former is a re-publication of diverse writings, in particular short works from the 1930s, including *Condições*. That these were re-published by Castro in the late 1950s, as the region was in turmoil, perhaps shows him shoring up his

⁶⁹ Castro, 167.

⁷⁰ Castro, 170.

⁷¹ Guerra, ‘Um Nome em Evidência: Josué de Castro’.

⁷² Forster, ‘The Poetry of C.P. Cavafy’.

⁷³ Ekers et al., ‘Barbed Gift’.

⁷⁴ Castro, ‘Speech in Legislative Assembly of Pernambuco’.

intellectual credentials as a voice on the Northeastern question, alongside his political activities. *Death in the Northeast*, meanwhile, is a considered reflection on the region in this period. It is poignant because it was written from Europe, but prior to 1964 and Castro's exile. I will return to exile and the role of the regional intellectual in the next chapter. The book marks something of a departure for Castro, written in a late style which was to remain undeveloped in longer works, in which geographical and bio-sociological methodological strictures are loosened. Read closely, *Death in the Northeast* gives the impression of a man at an intimate unease with his subject. These books, however, are not Castro's last word on the Northeast. We need to see his broader theory and praxis of underdevelopment as deeply regional itself.

Castro's writings on the Northeast are part of a long tradition in Brazilian studies⁷⁵. Yet discussions of region and nation in Brazilian studies have been at times disconnected from the history of Brazilian geographical ideas. Castro is one of the crucial missing links here. The Northeast itself has a vibrant regionalist tradition – of literature, folklore studies, anthropology and social sciences – whose 20th century figurehead was Gilberto Freyre. Freyre produced a critical understanding of the history of Brazil, and an endorsement of a multi-racial conception of society in the Northeast. However, his work relied upon a historical myth of a benign Brazilian form of slavery, and a consequent presentist myth of Brazilian racial democracy which manifested in an increasingly conservative, supremacist and imperialist tenor of thought⁷⁶. But Freyre is only one figure in a much richer tradition. Ironically, the most influential recent work on the Northeast – Durval Muniz de Albuquerque Junior's *The Invention of the Brazilian Northeast*, published in English in 2014 – denounces or, in spite of the book's impressive scope, ignores, a large part of the Northeast's intellectual and political output. As Ronald Chilcote puts it, he 'makes a case that politicians, intellectuals, writers, and artists "invented" the Northeast as a region and calls upon historians to abandon the static categories of regionalism in favour of national unity'⁷⁷. Rogério Haesbaert critiques Albuquerque's post-modernist notion of 'invention,' in which the Northeast is 'less [...] a place than a topos'⁷⁸. Albuquerque himself dismisses what he calls 'diverse "leftist" intellectuals' for failing to 'invert the official image of the region'⁷⁹. But he has little interest in the actual material forces that produce the region as a space to be negotiated: precisely that which those "leftist" intellectuals were interested in themselves. Albuquerque does not deal with the content or complexities of the modernizing forces and radical political agendas that did emerge in the Northeast in the middle of the twentieth century. He disregards the efflorescence of radical thought and

⁷⁵ Campbell, 'Invention'.

⁷⁶ Souza, *A Modernização Seletiva*, 211.

⁷⁷ Chilcote, 'Mystifying the Brazilian Northeast'.

⁷⁸ Rogério Haesbaert. 2010. 'Região, regionalização e regionalidade: questões contemporâneas. *Antares*. 3. Jan-June, p.8

⁷⁹ Albuquerque Jr, *The Invention of the Brazilian Northeast*, 223.

action that sought to remake the region materially and iconographically in thoroughly modern terms⁸⁰. He makes a single reference each to SUDENE and Castro. Though studying imaginary and real geographies, he makes no reference to actual geography or geographers. His bibliography does not include a reference to the most important Brazilian thinker of space and the region in the twentieth century: Milton Santos.

Similarly, Sarah Sarzynski's recent history of the Northeast around 1964⁸¹, once mentions Castro, but does not classify him as a geographer – a common feature of his legacy⁸² – or cite any work, not even *Death in the Northeast*, a monograph on the agrarian and political movements Sarzynski studies. She gets a number of things wrong about Castro's work: she identifies 'crab people' – referring to Castro's *homem caranguejo* – as a 'new catchphrase' in the early 1960s when Castro first wrote about the cycle of the crab thirty years before. This is more than a pedantic point: both Sarzynski and Albuquerque proceed through discourse analysis, seeing Northeastern social scientific and political work merely in terms of the propagation of, or resistance to, certain 'tropes', rather than as integral to political projects, or as agential theoretical and political analysis. Their consequent lack of interest in geographical thought – even where their research deals with space – is limiting and problematic. Firstly, it suggests that geographic insights are remaining bound within disciplinary silos. Secondly, it curtails interest in the actual content of ideas about space and nature which emerged in the Northeast itself. This reproduces the Northeast – as Kirkendall wrote of the 1964 coup – once again 'more as a problem than as a generator of possible solutions'⁸³. Albuquerque argues that the 'invention' of the Northeast 'as a region completely defined by lack and need' is down to the victimhood of Northeastern intellectuals. 'Arguments regarding Brazil's dependency and colonial roots of exploitation [...] have little of merit to offer since they share the premise that victimization defines us, that others are always to blame for every aspect of our primitivity, hunger, and misery'⁸⁴. This totally fails to account for the actual arguments of dependency analysis, or the relational mode of thinking which underscores it. It also disregards the political possibilities of anti-imperialism. I understand Northeastern intellectuals, and the idea of the region, in a very different way.

This is far from a dismissal of imaginative geographies. Rather – as per Rogério Haesbaert's couplet of the region as 'arte-fact' – they are dialectically connected to the region as material form. I therefore now turn to two key ways in which the geography of the Northeast has been imagined: firstly as *both*

⁸⁰ Santos, 'O Futuro Do Nordeste'.

⁸¹ Sarzynski, *Revolution in the Terra Do Sol*.

⁸² Ferretti, 'Geographies of Internationalism', March 2018.

⁸³ Kirkendall, 'Entering History', 184.

⁸⁴ Albuquerque Jr, *The Invention of the Brazilian Northeast*, 224.

the most Brazilian of regions, *and* as its most backward and dependent; secondly as a natural space, associated with the Nation, the divine and the messianic.

‘It is commonly said,’ wrote Francisco Julião, the Peasant League leader, ‘that the roots of Brazilian nationality lie in the North-East, with their origins and focus in Pernambuco’⁸⁵. This is a key trope about the region⁸⁶. Castro writes of the Northeast as ‘this piece of our territory so characteristically Brazilian’⁸⁷. Julião describes the Northeast’s *sertão*, rugged *sertanejos*, landlessness, deep inequality, migratory peoples and hunger and insists ‘this Brazil, or rather this North-East, is the true face of Brazil’⁸⁸. For Julião this is a critique of the nation by emphasising its divided qualities and, in particular, its inequality. Another, similar, rhetorical strategy is to describe other regions in Brazil as ‘Northeast’⁸⁹. The Northeast is a potent imaginative geography, as much as a material one. In the 20th century it emerged under these two contradictory signs as the most foundationally Brazilian of regions: the heartland. And as subordinate, extraneous, backward and dependent: the appendix. The notion of the Northeast as backward can be illustrated in racially, culturally and socio-ecologically derived southern superiority complexes, with political and economic correlates and consequences. This has a racial connotation, with the Northeast associated with racialized Afro-Brazilians, *caboclos* and *sertanejos*, often couched as inferior to a putatively ‘white’ South⁹⁰. When Castro – himself of mixed heritage – argued against racial anthropology in the 1930s – ‘*não é mal da raça, é mal da fome*’ (‘not a flaw ill of race, but of hunger’) – this was also an argument against a regionally inflected racial discourse. As Courtney Campbell has argued, outside the region Northeastern racial identities were mobilized to define a regional identity, precisely in order to reproduce the idea that they do not constitute a national identity⁹¹. We will see the political and economic sides of this dependency below: it is a trope that can have either regressive or progressive political potential, depending on how it is understood, mobilized and addressed in material terms.

Questions of regional underdevelopment are built on distinctly geographic problems: land, soil, irrigation, landscape, climate and energy. Albuquerque argues that the term ‘Northeast’ ‘as a regional designation originated [...] to describe a space specifically related to droughts, and the need for federal aid’⁹². Certainly the way in which the region came to be understood was intimately associated with its

⁸⁵ Julião, *Cambão - The Yoke: The Hidden Face of Brazil*, 87.

⁸⁶ Albuquerque Jr, *The Invention of the Brazilian Northeast*, 27.

⁸⁷ Castro, *Documentário Do Nordeste*, 7.

⁸⁸ Julião, *Cambão - The Yoke: The Hidden Face of Brazil*, 90.

⁸⁹ eg Oliveira, *Rio Grande do Sul*.

⁹⁰ Weinstein, *The Color of Modernity*; Blake, *Vigorous Core*.

⁹¹ Campbell, ‘Four Fishermen’.

⁹² Albuquerque Jr, *The Invention of the Brazilian Northeast*, 38; Campbell, ‘Four Fishermen’.

climate and ecology. The 1920s and 30s saw the rise and fall of regional separatism among the Northeastern sugar élites, associated in particular with Gilberto Freyre's thought. This interacted with ebbs and flows of national state aid and intervention targeted at alleviating drought⁹³. Amélia Cohn, in 1976, argued that 'the problem presented by the Northeast for the nation is configured, up to now, as a *regional* problem, represented by droughts'⁹⁴. That is, an ecological space determined by the dynamics of drought in the *sertão*. But the Brazilian Northeast was a site of geographical contention. It came into being, as a region and as a place (the distinction between the two not being hierarchical, but hermeneutic⁹⁵), through an often contradictory set of processes, deeply entangling ideas of place with those of ecology. The geographical demarcation of the Northeast employed by the state, in various forms, fluctuated⁹⁶, but it was always associated with a set of socio-natural relations particular to the region⁹⁷. As Breno Viotto Pedrosa's work has recently shown, the ecology, infrastructure and space of the region was also the subject not only of Milton Santos' work in this period, but of visiting left-wing French geographers including Jean Tricart, Jean Dresch and Pierre George. These engagements between Brazilian and French geography led to work on planning, regionalization and geomorphology, as well as becoming the basis for Santos' broader, influential output over the longer term. Indeed, the connections established at this time led to collaborative development of ideas about the region in geography, for instance in the 1968 seminar "La régionalisation de l'espace au Brésil" [The regionalization of space in Brazil] held at the Centre of Studies of Tropical Geography where Santos at the University of Bordeaux worked in exile⁹⁸.

Castro was a key precursor of this work. One essential tenet of the region's artifice, art and factuality is drought. Drought was the most important initial correlate of Castro's central argument that hunger was a social, not a natural phenomenon. He debunked the idea – like many later political ecologists and political economists⁹⁹ – that climatic conditions were the direct cause of hunger in the Northeast: 'the most important problem of the Northeast is far from being that of drought. Drought is just the drop of water that makes the pool of suffering of the Northeast overflow. Drought is absolutely secondary'¹⁰⁰. Picking up on the last chapter, translation, here, is theoretically productive. Drought, in Castro's original Portuguese here, is '*a seca*'. This term, though translating quite directly as 'drought,' can also mean a

⁹³ Buckley, 'Drought'.

⁹⁴ Cohn, *Crise Regional e Planejamento* [Regional Crisis and Planning], 56.

⁹⁵ Santos, *A natureza do espaço*, 108.

⁹⁶ Buckley, 'Drought'; Buckley, *Technocrats*.

⁹⁷ Campbell, 'Four Fishermen'.

⁹⁸ Pedrosa, 'The Long Journey of Milton Santos's Exile and the Formation of His Network of Cooperation'; See also Bowd and Clayton, 'Geographical Warfare in the Tropics', 639–41.

⁹⁹ Sen, *The Political Economy of Hunger*; Davis, *Late Victorian Holocausts: El Nino Famines and the Making of the Third World*.

¹⁰⁰ Castro and Furtado, Celso, 'Operação Nordeste: Dois Nomes e Duas Opiniões', 33.

permanently dry place¹⁰¹: it is partly a spatial as well as a temporal concept. For Castro ‘the problem of water is important in the Northeast, but much more important is the problem of man’¹⁰². Drought raises the question of who is to blame and who is going to do something about it, but also the spatial, social, political and ecological constitution of the region itself. Inseparable from this are the conjoined questions of the state, and infrastructure. All of this suggests the political ecology of the region itself: that is, the region is produced as a demarcated subset of space whose existence as such depends on a politicized conception of nature.

Marilena Chauí’s work helps us understand the philosophical, historical and political stakes of nature here. I take an excursus through her work to identify the stakes of Castro’s geographical intervention into understandings of the Brazilian Northeast. In a seminal essay recently translated by Maite Conde, she associates the Brazilian ‘foundation myth’ with a renaissance Portuguese conflation of Nature and Brazil rooted in Catholic legal doctrine and medieval European myth of the Fortunate Islands to be found in the West. This produced the image of Brazil-Nature, captured in the Brazilian flag, whose four colours

‘do not express politics or relate to the country’s history. It is a symbol of nature. It is Brazil as garden, Brazil-paradise. Any Brazilian child knows very well that the green represents our forests, the yellow our mineral wealth, the blue the perfection of our sky, the white the kindness of our good-natured hearts’¹⁰³.

This foundation myth required extraordinary contortions by the colonizing Portuguese in order to nevertheless justify the plantation economic system based on slavery: ‘the enslavement of Indians and Blacks shows us that God and the Devil do battle in the Land of the Sun. It could be no different, since the serpent inhabited paradise’¹⁰⁴. Chauí further defines the spatiality of this profoundly political and ecological ‘image of Brazil-Nature’ as associated with the Northeast’s internal divisions. ‘The cosmic battle between God and the Devil that appears in the colonial period [is not due to] social divisions, but to divisions of and in nature itself: the New World is divided between the coast and the backlands’¹⁰⁵. Chauí’s analysis dissolves Albuquerque’s more simplistic notion that ‘the Northeast is a child of the ruins of an older conceptual geography of Brazil that posited a national segmentation into North and South’¹⁰⁶. For Chauí a more precise ideology of space and nature was at stake. If, as Wainwright argues, ‘Said [...] drew from Gramsci a sensitivity for the ways in which imperial geographies come to be

¹⁰¹ Dicionária Priberam da Língua Portuguesa, ‘Consulte o significado / definição de seca’.

¹⁰² Castro, ‘Interview Typescript’.

¹⁰³ Chauí, *Between Conformity and Resistance*, 117.

¹⁰⁴ Chauí, 120.

¹⁰⁵ Chauí, 120.

¹⁰⁶ Albuquerque Jr, *The Invention of the Brazilian Northeast*, 15.

accepted as natural'¹⁰⁷, then here we can draw from Chauí a specific idea of such imperial geographies in the Brazilian context, the work that 'natural' did, and the work that such imaginative geographies of nature have since done.

The *sertão* – the dry inland of the Northeast – is, as a kind of place, relational: it exists in terms of a coast, or a centre. The English translation reveals this: backlands are the back of somewhere. Castro drew his understanding of the *sertões* not only from research and personal experience, but from the regional literature of the Northeast, in particular Graciliano Ramos and Raquel de Queiróz¹⁰⁸. He wrote about these novelists as truly disruptive, even 'proletarian' voices against the complacencies of Brazilian literature's intellectualism¹⁰⁹. A key precursor for Castro in geographical study of the Northeast was Euclides da Cunha. For Chauí, Euclides' description 'substitut[es] God and the Devil for science, that is, a study of the climate, geology, and geography' of the *sertão*.

'Euclides describes a land tortured by the fury of the elements. He describes a rape. Feminized, the land is assaulted, tormented; its intimate texture is martyred, beaten by the heat and degraded by the rain. Yet, this tragic vision of a tortured nature is counterposed with epic descriptions of its inhabitant – the *sertanejo* [...] establishing a contrast between the land's feminine pain with his courageous masculine force'¹¹⁰.

Chauí argues that this conception of nature underwrites narratives of natural, racial destiny critical to the spatial conquest of the interior and the west of the country. This 'geography of power'¹¹¹ drove integralist and fascistic national imaginaries in the first half of the twentieth century and relates to the concentrations of force in the Centre-South but also to how that force was reliant on spaces imagined to be subservient. Reliant in two ways: firstly as the material conditions of possibility for power, with the West and the Northeast functioning as sites of primitive accumulation and expansion, and secondly as discursive resources for nation-building. These kinds of geographies are at work in Todd Diacon's analysis of the Rondon Commission's telegraph line into Brazil's western interior. Deploying heroic narratives of exploration, positivist modernizers sought to 'string together a nation' through infrastructural expansion to incorporate the interior¹¹². Exploring the ideologies of nature and nation that underpinned such projects, Chauí returns to the prophecy of the messianic figure of the *sertão*, Antônio Conselheiro: 'the backlands will become the sea and the sea will become the backlands,' a

¹⁰⁷ Wainwright, 'The Geographies of Political Ecology', 1036.

¹⁰⁸ Cardoso, 'Josué de Castro e os sertões nordestinos de Geografia da Fome', 524.

¹⁰⁹ Castro, 'O Nordeste e o Romance Brasileiro'.

¹¹⁰ Chauí, *Between Conformity and Resistance*, 121.

¹¹¹ Chauí, 122.

¹¹² Diacon, *Stringing Together*.

prophecy repeated and reimagined in popular music and *cinema novo* in the 1960s¹¹³. In a stylish turn of phrase, elegantly translated by Conde, Chauí writes, that ‘intoxicated by nature, we entered history’. ‘Brazil, a Portuguese discovery, entered history through the gates of paradise. This idea will become the dominant class’ version of this country, according to which our history has already been written’¹¹⁴. The gendered, colonial concept of nature can be seen in productivist narratives of modernist economic development and infrastructure in the arid Northeast, conceptualized, as Chauí describes, as passive, inert and inferior¹¹⁵. The intoxication with nature relies on a profound semantic division, by which the natural landscape of the Northeast is associated with the nation, the divine and the messianic. Chauí therefore helps us locate the importance of Castro’s intervention into the political natures of the Northeast. Castro at times still wrote in masculinist and conquistorial terms about the colonization of land¹¹⁶, but, contrary to intoxication, Castro re-casts the Northeast’s landscape as already and continually a product of human intervention and socio-economic forces. He recasts the messianic as driven by hunger¹¹⁷. Nature-Nation is no longer earthly paradise and natural racial destiny, but the exploitative landscapes of colonial social relations. Castro’s fundamental geographical analysis – that the drought – the dry landscape Euclides described – is not a ‘natural’, but a social phenomenon, is therefore a powerful intervention in the epistemology of nature, and the spatial politics of the Northeast. Castro’s theory was matched by practice. He refused to accept the *sertão* as a lost cause and continually agitated for reform to enable the Northeast to have social and economic independence¹¹⁸. He defended the nutritional and ecological benefits of the *caatinga*¹¹⁹, the scrubby desert of the Northeast, attempting (akin to Nancy Stepan’s analysis of the landscape designer Roberto Burle Marx, who worked in Recife in the 1930s¹²⁰) to re-appropriate it as a kind of ‘respectable’ nature, against understandings of it as a wilderness. When agrarian reform failed, he set up his own projects (mainly under the auspices of his quasi-NGO ASCOFAM) to provide food, investment and technical expertise¹²¹. The Northeast then, was a field of action as much as it was a spatial category determined by a conflictual, politicized nature. As Doreen Massey put it, ‘a lot of thinking about place has nature as the stable backdrop, as the eternal’¹²². Castro’s role in regional debates was to unsettle just that conception, and to begin to establish pathways of action once that had been insisted upon. Here, again, we should come back to Milton

¹¹³ Sarzynski, *Revolution in the Terra Do Sol*, 1–3.

¹¹⁴ Chauí, *Between Conformity and Resistance*, 131.

¹¹⁵ Scott, *Seeing Like a State*.

¹¹⁶ eg Castro, ‘Regionalismo e Paisagem Cultural’.

¹¹⁷ Castro, *Geografia da Fome*.

¹¹⁸ Cardoso, ‘Sertão’; Bizzo, ‘Ação política’.

¹¹⁹ Castro et al., ‘Alimentos Bárbaros’.

¹²⁰ Stepan, ‘Tropical Modernism’.

¹²¹ Schappo, ‘Josué de Castro por uma agricultura de sustentação’; Carvalho, ‘O pão nosso’; Bizzo, ‘Ação política’.

¹²² Massey et al., ‘The Possibilities of a Politics of Place Beyond Place?’, 412.

Santos' contention: when thinking about drought in the Northeast it is Castro first. I turn now, to Furtado second.

C. The Struggle for SUDENE: Praxis and theory of the underdeveloped region

Haesbaert's notion of the dialectically connected quality of the region as arte-fact requires moving from geographical imaginaries to the material transformations that produced the region as a space to be negotiated. These transformations were a hot political topic between 1955 and 1964. Different groups were trying to produce the Northeast as a region in opposing ways. Conflicting assessments of the economic, political and ecological drivers of the Northeast's problems were also epistemological debates over scale: over what it meant to define the Northeast's problems as predominately local, national or international.

To prioritize the region as a scale here is to say two things. Firstly, that we can't understand Brazilian thought or politics in this period – whether in terms of the cold war, agrarian social relations or national developmentalism – without thinking about the region. Secondly, it is to dwell on those radical projects which sought to materially transform the region. This praxis of radical regionalism included SUDENE, but also attempts at agrarian and land reform, and the radical governments of Miguel Arraes in Recife and Pernambuco. In various ways these were practical attempts to re-make the region by unpicking and re-constituting the material drivers of regional underdevelopment. That required, therefore, a theory of regional underdevelopment in the first place. While enlightened technocrats figure heavily in this discussion, radical regionalism emerges not only through intellectuals, but peasant leagues, grassroots movements, films, institutions, and public debates. This was praxis as theory. That SUDENE was a patrician project is significant – it is one of the reasons that it ultimately failed – but must be placed in context. There were observable connections not only between technocrats and peasants, but across the intellectual worlds of dependency theory, anti-imperialism and agrarian movements. For instance, in February 1964, in the newspaper of the Peasant Leagues, *Liga*, distributed directly to peasants and organizers in the *sertão*, appeared a translation of Andre Gunder Frank's *Monthly Review* article on the 'development of underdevelopment' of July 1963. This translation, writes the journalist in *Liga*, has as its original a translation of Frank's work published by the Movimento de Izquierda Revolucionária in Cuzco, Peru¹²³. This flow of knowledge is worth dwelling on. At the time that *Liga* published Frank's first major foray into what became dependency theory he was working at the University of Brasília¹²⁴. Yet the article did not reach *Liga* through the backlands of Brazil but via the highlands of Peru. The wider anti-colonial project – in the context of which I am suggesting the struggles of the radical

¹²³ Anonymous, 'Liga, 2nd February 1964', 493.

¹²⁴ Anonymous, 'Anders Gunder Frank, Biography'.

Northeast should be seen – was peppered with elite, enlightened technocrats, often attempting to align themselves with, and have dialogues with, grassroots movements. In spite of their democratic failings, these Third Worldist intellectuals were nevertheless critical to the largest emancipatory movement of the twentieth century: decolonization. The technocratic tenor of SUDENE should be taken in this vein. Indeed, it was not only in Third World contexts that the idea of rational planning had a radical tenor. As David Harvey noted, of the 1960s in British geography, ‘you need to remember that for many of us who had some political ambitions for the discipline, rational planning was not a bad word in the sixties [...] the efficiency of regional and urban planning was going to be a lever of social betterment for the whole population’¹²⁵

Josué de Castro, as I will explore in the next chapter, was a profoundly engaged intellectual, working with trade unions, students and peasant organizations. This informed his approach to the central question of the anti-imperialist project in Brazil: land. In the 1950s ‘the problem of agrarian reform, hitherto avoided as being too explosive to touch, became an obligatory item in all political discussions’¹²⁶. Key to Castro’s enduring political legacy is that he had been arguing for agrarian reform since the 1930s. But reform efforts had failed and the state of tension increased throughout the 1950s. Rural organizers and peasants were subject to incessant violence and repression amid accusations of communist activity and rumours of violent revolt¹²⁷. In September 1955 Castro hosted the first meeting of rural workers in Pernambuco, with thousands of peasants marching through Recife. As Featherstone argues, with Gramsci, it is important to be ‘attentive to the spatial practices through which solidarities are constructed’¹²⁸ and this movement of rural workers into urban Recife was a key moment in building Northeastern solidarities in this period. It can be seen as prefiguring the alliances of Arraes and the *Frente do Recife* [Recife Front] that would emerge at the end of the decade¹²⁹. In a speech at the march in 1955, Castro compared the struggle over Engenho Galiléia with Jesus’s struggle in Galilee¹³⁰. Arguably the high point of the Peasant Leagues’ movement was the Congress in Belo Horizonte in 1961, which marked a victory for more radical elements of the rural movements¹³¹. Celso Furtado thought the agrarian movement had the characteristics of classic pre-revolutionary formations¹³² and

¹²⁵ Harvey, *Spaces of Capital*, 2001, 5.

¹²⁶ Arraes, Brazil: The People and the Power, 152.

¹²⁷ Santiago, Pernambuco em chamas; Sarzynski, Revolution in the Terra Do Sol, 20–40; Jaccoud, Movimentos sociais e crise política em Pernambuco, 1955-1968.

¹²⁸ Featherstone, “‘Gramsci in Action’: Space, Politics, and the Making of Solidarities’, 68.

¹²⁹ Soares, A frente do Recife e o governo do Arraes; Pereira, The End of the Peasantry, 121–22.

¹³⁰ Sarzynski, Revolution in the Terra Do Sol, 36.

¹³¹ For their later development, see Pereira, *The End of the Peasantry*

¹³² Clodomir, ‘Entrevista: Clodomir Moraes’.

Antonio Callado called Pernambuco a ‘pilot revolution’ under Miguel Arraes¹³³. Much of this discussion is laced with a hope many on the left in Brazil felt in the years before the coup¹³⁴. They certainly played a part in raising the political stakes of the time: Bambirra, for example, argued that rural unrest in the Northeast was critical to the rupture of 1964, citing large strikes in May 1963¹³⁵.

Castro, while he had long-standing political and personal relationships¹³⁶ with peasant leaders – including the divisive¹³⁷ Francisco Julião – was himself not convinced of the Peasant Leagues’ revolutionary potential, and his relationship with Julião was also somewhat fraught. They worked together, but Castro found Julião exasperating. Castro’s archive includes a newspaper clipping of an article by Julião from December 1969 in which Julião critiques academic research on the Northeast – including specifically ‘geographies of hunger’ – which aren’t attached to ‘practical measures’¹³⁸. Castro¹³⁹ notes in the margin that Julião is ‘incompetent’ and has an ‘inferiority complex.’ ‘This guy’s ‘practical measures’ involve spending four years without working, in Cuernavaca, writing poetry,’ he annotates acerbically¹⁴⁰. Castro emphasized that the Leagues were a manifestation of desperation: their initial demand was not even for the rights of the living, but for a decent funeral¹⁴¹. Nevertheless they staked a claim to mass representation and brought new urgency to the question of agrarian reform. Castro’s relationship with the communist pedagogue Clodomir Moraes dos Santos – another key Peasant League leader – was also important: they remained in epistolary contact in the late 1960s, and in 1968 Castro discussed with Moraes the possibility of writing a further analysis of the Peasant Leagues and their role in the Northeast¹⁴².

Castro had long argued that agrarian reform was not only about appropriation and redistribution of land but ‘a process of revision of the legal and economic relations between those who hold ownership of agricultural land and those work it’¹⁴³. In the early 1950s he was key to the National Commission on Agrarian Policy. He had sought to secure advice and support from the FAO, requesting experts be sent to advise the Commission ‘with experience in the problem of land division as such, as well as to the

¹³³ Callado, *Industriais da seca*.

¹³⁴ Rogers, *The Deepest Wounds*, 133–35.

¹³⁵ Bambirra, ‘Exodo Rural’; Forman, ‘Disunity and Discontent’.

¹³⁶ Melo and Neves, 2007.

¹³⁷ Forman, ‘Disunity and Discontent’; Pereira, ‘Profeta no exílio’; Pereira, ‘O Declínio das Ligas Camponesas’, 253–55.

¹³⁸ Julião, ‘Encuentro con América’.

¹³⁹ There is other handwriting in the archive, but this appears to be Castro’s.

¹⁴⁰ Castro, ‘Annotations on article “Encuentro con América” by Francisco Julião’.

¹⁴¹ Castro, *Death in the Northeast*, 7.

¹⁴² Letter to Moraes, published in Clodomir, ‘Josué de Castro: Brasileiro e Cidadão Do Mundo [Josué de Castro: Brazilian and Citizen of the World]’.

¹⁴³ Castro, ‘A Reforma Agrária’.

classification of land with regard to its agricultural possibilities'¹⁴⁴, specifically requesting experts from Italy and Japan. The commission did not achieve meaningful reform in part because land did need to be appropriated by the state for any reform to function. But the Brazilian constitution required compensation for expropriated land. The key question, therefore, was how to value land: according to 'just value', 'historical value', or 'attributed value'? It was around such issues that clashes between the *latifundia* and reformers crystallized and reform efforts stalled. SUDENE emerged in part as a way around the fact that a large part of the state – particularly the lower house of Parliament¹⁴⁵ – was an extension of the interests of landed capital. It faced strong resistance from vested landed interests¹⁴⁶. As Haesbaert suggests, the region is a piece of 'political hardware': in the absence of structural reform, it was to be put to new uses.

Castro was sympathetic to the SUDENE project, but keen to debate and influence its make-up. In April 1959 Furtado and Castro debated on the radio programme, 'Cartas na Mesa' [Cards on the Table]¹⁴⁷. A transcription was published by the magazine *O Observador Econômico e Financeiro*: 'Operação Nordeste: Dois Nomes e Duas Opiniões' [Operation Northeast: Two Names and Two Opinions]. This provides us with a key source for analysing Castro's geographical mode of thinking about the Northeast, and the emerging Weberian approach of Celso Furtado¹⁴⁸. Furtado had just published *Operação Nordeste*, commissioned by President Kubitschek, which laid out not only the political and economic philosophy of what was to become SUDENE, but also its core plan of action.

¹⁴⁴ Castro, 'Letters to Herbet Broadley'.

¹⁴⁵ Oliveira, *Elegia para uma Re(li)gião*, 47–53.

¹⁴⁶ Meneses, 'Um "Macarthismo Hidráulico" Contra a Sudene'.

¹⁴⁷ See also other public debates between Furtado and Castro in December 1962. 'Celso Presta Contas ao Conselho: "SUDENE Cumpriu as Suas Tarefas". *Última Hora*. Recife. Terça-Feira, 4th December 1962. p.3

¹⁴⁸ This is how Oliveira characterises Furtado's thought. Though a Marxist by instinct Oliveira sees his old colleague above all as a Weberian. See Oliveira, 'A criação da Sudene'.

The two men's initial statements of position reveal distinct interpretations of the spatial and ecological dimensions of regional underdevelopment (Figure 19)¹⁴⁹. In *Operação Nordeste* Furtado proposed moving tens of thousands of people to Maranhão for agricultural colonization. Defending this displacement he said the problem of where the workforce was located 'for us economists, [...] seems very simple'¹⁵⁰. Castro's humanist geography is opposed to such forced movement. Furtado's response is illuminating: the combination of factors of production is a question of 'técnica' and technology. The debate therefore prefigures concerns of theoretical and critical geographers in following decades. I'll return to this in the next chapter, but *técnica* was to become central to Milton Santos' work on spatial theory¹⁵¹, as it was to Castro's critique of 'progress' and 'development'¹⁵². Debates over technology were also significant at the time to the emerging Prebisch-Singer hypothesis of declining terms of trade, which underpinned much of dependency theory's work. Furtado and Castro debate precisely the spatial division of labour, and the relationship between labour, land and territory. The structuralist economics of Furtado comes into contact with the proto-political ecology, and human geography, of Castro. Whilst Furtado's solution appears radical, Castro argues that it is fundamentally aimed at an effect not a cause. The avowed dialectician, Furtado, stands accused by the geographer, Castro, of being insufficiently dialectical: 'it does not seem to me that a structural excess of work-force is sufficient to authorize this displacement [of people]. Structure is in movement. It is

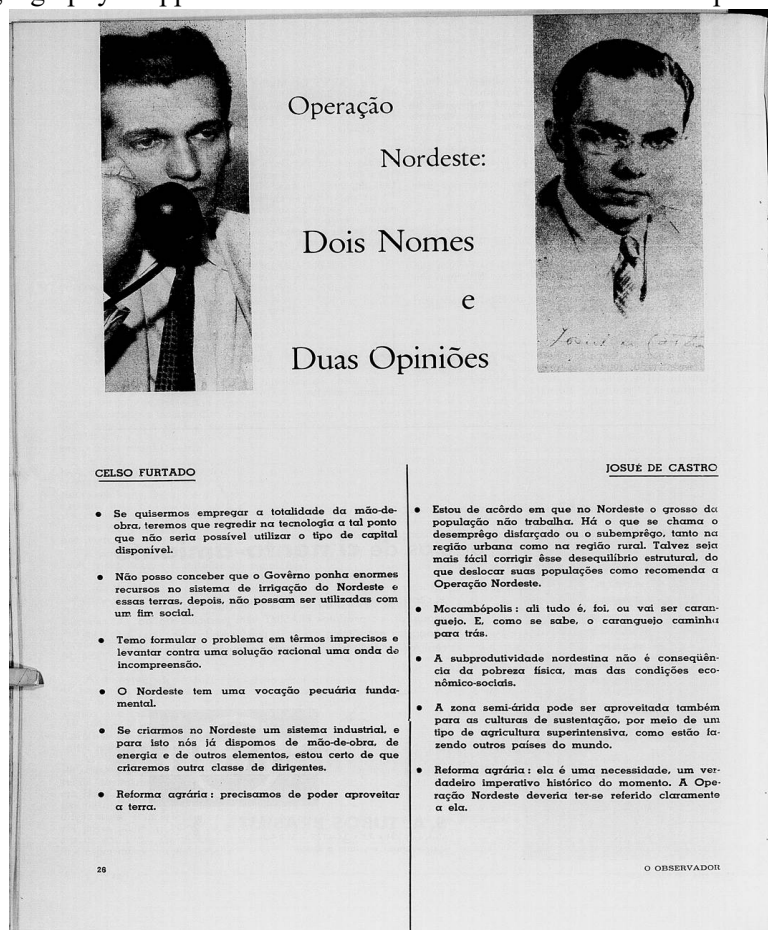


Figure 19: *Operação Nordeste: Dois Nomes e Duas Opiniões* ('Operation Northeast: Two Names and Two Opinions'). *O Observador Econômico e Financeiro*. April 1959, pp. 27-33. Hemeroteca Digital, Biblioteca Nacional de Brasil.

¹⁴⁹ Cardoso, 'Sertão'; Magno, Tânia Elias, *Memória Do Saber*.

¹⁵⁰ Castro and Furtado, Celso, 'Operação Nordeste: Dois Nomes e Duas Opiniões', 29.

¹⁵¹ Davies, 'Milton Santos'.

¹⁵² Castro, *Ensaio de biologia social*, 183–85.

dynamic. It is exactly upon this structure that we must act'¹⁵³. Furtado defends his plan, saying capital is a limiting factor, so the movement of people is necessary. Castro retorts that moving thousands of people to new lands is surely expensive.

Castro then turns to Recife and the cycle of the crab. By referring to the *mocambópolis*, Castro connects urban poverty directly to the macro-economic policy debates of underdevelopment and dependency. In bringing the socio-natural conditions of urban life into discussions over the regional production of space he was ahead of his time. Fifty-one years later, in 2010, Francisco de Oliveira, the political and economic theorist who worked with Furtado as a young man at SUDENE¹⁵⁴, wrote that returning to the original problem – the poverty of the Northeast as a *rural* region – was not adequate: 'the greatest destitution today is urban. It is in this context that the question of the Northeast must be confronted, if not, it will have no resolution'¹⁵⁵. It was central, too, to Oliveira's broader theorization of Brazilian political economy¹⁵⁶, and the upsurge of work on Brazilian urbanism and inequality. In 1959, Castro was already exploring these questions.

In the 1959 debate a key point of differentiation emerged when Castro suggested that natural conditions can be changed. Furtado, meanwhile, promotes the Northeast's 'pastoral vocation.' Castro's long-standing geographical argument is in play: social outcomes are not determined by natural conditions, but by their interplay with political and economic structure. Furtado is more willing to propose solutions with the grain of existing rural structures. Covering land reform, irrigation, institutional structures, agricultural incentives and the pricing of water, Castro critiques Furtado for failing to make a clear statement in favour of agrarian reform. The latter's position is ambiguous and cautious, and Castro insists that he has skipped over the most important factor in the Northeast's economic problems: the structure of agrarian social relations¹⁵⁷. Furtado seems on the backfoot: 'I hope to be able to create an irrigated agriculture in the Northeast with a social purpose. And I hope that with Dr Josué, in the Parliament, with his prestige, with his dialectical power, will contribute to giving us the necessary instruments'¹⁵⁸. While the 'necessary instruments' (i.e. meaningful legislative agrarian reform) – are elusive – Furtado stakes out the ground of the enlightened technocrat, attempting to hold Castro's political commitment at bay.

¹⁵³ Castro and Furtado, Celso, 'Operação Nordeste: Dois Nomes e Duas Opiniões', 29.

¹⁵⁴ Schwarz, 'Preface with Questions'.

¹⁵⁵ Oliveira, 'A criação da Sudene', 18.

¹⁵⁶ Oliveira, 'The Duckbilled Platypus', 43–44.

¹⁵⁷ Castro and Furtado, Celso, 'Operação Nordeste: Dois Nomes e Duas Opiniões'.

¹⁵⁸ 'Operação Nordeste'. In Magno, Tânia Elias, *Memória Do Saber*.

This political difference is connected to differing conceptions of nature. Castro resists Furtado's characterization of rural poverty as a consequence of the quality of the soil: the quality of the soil, Castro insisted, was a historical, political and economic problem itself:

Castro – Sugar cane exhausted the soil by deeply unsuitable forms of cultivation [...] I want to insist that we are not dealing with a physical problem. It is not a problem of the richness of poorness of the soil. It is an economic problem.

Furtado – It is a physical problem: the problem of the quantity of land per person working in agriculture, land that, as I said, is a little more than half as good as that which we see in the centre-south of Brazil.

Castro – But I consider this ratio to be a human, economic problem and not a physical problem. Physical problems are the type of the soil, its fertility, its biotic potential [...] the volume of population that rely on it cannot be considered as part of its physical condition. The population is a human condition, not physical¹⁵⁹.

Castro was not alone in identifying sugar as a despoiling crop which transformed the environment¹⁶⁰, a position that has since become received wisdom¹⁶¹, but it seems he did not convince Furtado. In 1964 the latter wrote that 'the agricultural pattern that predominates throughout the country, based on rudimentary techniques, has been increasing its costs as a result of the *natural exhaustion* of soil and the moving of farms further inland from the principal consumption centres along the coast' (my emphasis)¹⁶². Furtado's analysis, unlike Castro's, sees environmental exploitation as a stable factor of production, not a dynamic moment in the expansion of colonialism and capitalism. This point is intrinsic to practical political problems: whether to directly intervene in agrarian social relations or hope they'll resolve themselves by industrial investment (what Castro called the choice between 'bread and steel'). This choice has spatial connotations. Castro criticized the post-1964 government for directing investment to already-industrialized areas: without balanced development through structural reform and geographically distributed state investment in agrarian and industrial sectors the fundamental contradictions in the Brazilian economy would remain¹⁶³.

In spite of Castro's critiques and Furtado's caution, the founding of SUDENE was a seminal moment that 'divide[d] the history of the Northeast into a before and an after'¹⁶⁴. The idea to use economic planning produced the Northeast as an experimental site of developmental economics, just as it was a

¹⁵⁹ Castro and Furtado, Celso, 'Operação Nordeste: Dois Nomes e Duas Opiniões'.

¹⁶⁰ Julião, Cambão - The Yoke: The Hidden Face of Brazil, 31.

¹⁶¹ Andrade, Land and People.

¹⁶² Furtado, *Diagnosis*, xxi.

¹⁶³ Castro, The Geopolitics of Hunger, 165–95.

¹⁶⁴ Singer, 'Crítica e Rememoração', 15.

pre-revolutionary rural tinder-box. From expansions of reservoirs through to the relocation of workers to distant parts of Maranhão, the developmentalist regional planning deepened and broadened a politics of state intervention in rural economies. SUDENE was not the only instance of such attempts, which also extended to the *Companhia do Vale do São Francisco* [The San Francisco Valley Company], a project enacted in collaboration with the United States and modelled on the Tennessee Valley Authority. Breno Viotto Pedrosa sees this organization as also influenced by ongoing debates over geography and planning. Milton Santos was also involved in an economic planning commission in Bahia, another Northeastern state¹⁶⁵. Not least through Santos this was closely tied to the development and application of Brazilian geography, at the University of Bahia's Laboratory of Geomorphology and Regional Studies¹⁶⁶. SUDENE was a very different kind of approach, however, with the direct intention of altering the balance of class power in the region. This was a new vision for the regional state. The shifting beneficiaries of intervention were no longer venal landowners who controlled federal agencies, but new agents of developmentalist policy: the progressive state, the regional commercial farmer, the mid-scale industrialist and external capital, all coordinated in the public interest by the radical technocrat.

The plan for SUDENE amounted to the production of a new scale and form of the region. Treating the Northeast as a whole for economic purposes was still controversial, with many arguing that it was too diverse for such an approach¹⁶⁷. This re-scaling was attempted through a material re-interpretation of the area that the regional state could act upon: for instance the state of Maranhão was incorporated into SUDENE's remit, even though it was not normally considered part of the Northeast¹⁶⁸. SUDENE also tried to alter investment flows as tax incentives encouraged investment from the Centre-South into the Northeast (tellingly, after 1964, the same mechanisms encouraged foreign investment in the Northeast¹⁶⁹). These approaches altered the region's relationship with the nation, but also with the global and the local. In 1961 Castro was still an important spokesman for radical regional reform, as a prerequisite for national development¹⁷⁰. He was optimistic about SUDENE's early achievements¹⁷¹, and wrote later that following the debates of SUDENE's early years, outlined above, in the years up to 1964 Furtado 'began to see the situation in its totality and to pay attention not only to industrialization

¹⁶⁵ Pedrosa, 'The Long Journey of Milton Santos's Exile and the Formation of His Network of Cooperation'.

¹⁶⁶ Santos and Carvalho, *A Geografia Aplicada*.

¹⁶⁷ Singer, *Estudo Sobre o Desenvolvimento Econômico Do Nordeste*, 124.

¹⁶⁸ Pereira and Pereira, 'A Questão Regional No Pensamento de Antonio Gramsci e Celso Furtado'; Oliveira, *Elegia para uma Re(li)gião*, 37.

¹⁶⁹ Oliveira, *Noiva da revolução/Elegia para uma re(li)gião* [Fiancée of the revolution / Elegy for a re(li)gion], 263–70.

¹⁷⁰ Castro, 'Problema Regional e Problema Nacional'.

¹⁷¹ Various, 'Newspaper Clippings 1961: Northeast'.

but to the much more serious and immediate agricultural problems'¹⁷². In 1964, in Castro's analysis, the 'people and movements [...] represent a variety of forces which are all going in the same general direction – toward emancipation [...] the problems, desires and movements sprang spontaneously from the social structure of the region and were charged emotionally by a climate of despair'¹⁷³. He wrote this just prior to the military coup of 1964. The region was the site of both political hope and socio-political risk.

Reconsidering 'regional political ecology', Peter Walker argues that 'the meso-scale of regional and especially county-level political institutions [...] are] key arenas of environmental politics'¹⁷⁴. This was certainly the case for SUDENE. However, beyond Walker, state interventions in 'environmental politics' are themselves, as Swyngedouw makes clear¹⁷⁵, efforts to construct scale: here, the region. Conceptualising the regional state through its manifestation as infrastructure or land reform treats it not as a fixed entity, object, or thing but as 'produced through—and help[ing to] reproduce—historically and geographically specific socioecological processes. When the state is de-fetishized in this way [...] we can introduce a helpful distinction between the state *qua* apparatus and *qua* relation [...] The former, here, refers to the material institutions of the state, with the latter referring to the historically and geographically specific socio-ecological processes or relations out of which the state apparatus is constituted'¹⁷⁶. Thinking of SUDENE as a relational, regional, state actor helps to understand the debates about nature and space which attended its creation. These debates were not simply about economic policy, but about the existence of the Northeast in relation to the local, the national and the international. They were debates, too, about the region in relation to contested, specific, spatially-defined socio-natures – the polygon of droughts, the *sertão* and the *mocambópolis* – which, as the discussion of Chauí and Euclides above demonstrates, were profoundly important geographical imaginaries.

SUDENE sought to construct new political spatialities. Swyngedouw's words about Spain's early twentieth-century hydraulic mission apply here: 'to "remedy" the national economic and social malaise and disintegration, to redeem and "re-generate" Spain's troubled geography. [The mission] aimed at resolving the agricultural crisis and the proliferating social tensions arising from an increasingly discontented, revolting and impoverished peasantry and at addressing the failure to 'modernize' agricultural production from the part of the landed elites'¹⁷⁷. SUDENE had a similar task at the scale of

¹⁷² Castro, *Death in the Northeast*, 184.

¹⁷³ Castro, 168.

¹⁷⁴ Walker, 'Reconsidering "Regional" Political Ecologies', 25.

¹⁷⁵ Swyngedouw, 'Technonatural Revolutions'.

¹⁷⁶ Angel, 'Towards an Energy Politics In-Against-and-Beyond the State'.

¹⁷⁷ Swyngedouw, 'Technonatural Revolutions', 11.

the region. It emerged from prior attempts ‘to identify the new nature of the “regional” relations of Brazil under the aegis of the capitalist expansion radiating from the Centre-South [which] can be understood as “remote causes” of the creation of SUDENE’¹⁷⁸. In other words, it emerged amid the beginnings of dependency theory. Hans Singer, one of the authors of a key tenet of dependency theory – the Prebisch-Singer hypothesis of declining terms of trade – visited the Northeast in 1953 while working for the UN. Another, Paul Baran, visited SUDENE in the early 1960s to give a seminar¹⁷⁹. Hans Singer, in 1953, wrote a report analysing the Northeastern economy¹⁸⁰ – including arguing that agrarian structure was a key factor in the Northeast’s underdevelopment¹⁸¹ – and helped establish regional development institutions¹⁸². Singer’s work is just one sign of the important role of emerging dependency theory in this conjuncture. Furtado is the crucial figure here. Mainstream accounts of dependency theory’s history, such as that of Garcia et al., describe the emerging argument in this period as aiming ‘to change the unequal international division of labour they believed was responsible for decreasing the bargaining power of Latin American countries in their commercial relations with Europe and the United States’¹⁸³. They do not address how this argument was being worked through also at the scale of the region itself. The question of whether, internally, the exchanges between the Northeast and the rest of the country were equal or unequal was not new. The core tenets of the Prebisch-Singer hypothesis had already been established in 1949-50¹⁸⁴, but they were developed in important ways in the Northeast¹⁸⁵, into what became a theory of internal colonialism¹⁸⁶.

It is important not to oversimplify this intellectual history. Inside analyses of the Northeast we can observe the fracturing of dependency theory¹⁸⁷, with Furtado’s structuralist approach dividing from Ruy Mauro Marini’s concept of ‘underdevelopment as super-exploitation’¹⁸⁸. Marini connected the export of primary raw materials with further suppression of wages in the dependent context, a theory which has potentially fruitful connections with Castro’s geography of hunger, in particular through Dussel’s

¹⁷⁸ Oliveira, *Elegia para uma Re(li)gião*. 99

¹⁷⁹ Oliveira, *Noiva da revolução/Elegia para uma re(li)gião* [Fiancée of the revolution / Elegy for a re(li)gion], 69.

¹⁸⁰ Singer, *Estudo Sobre o Desenvolvimento Econômico Do Nordeste*.

¹⁸¹ Singer, 95–96.

¹⁸² Buckley, *Technocrats*, 183–86.

¹⁸³ Garcia, Mendonça, and Borba de Sá, ‘International Political in Latin America: Redefining the Periphery’, 436.

¹⁸⁴ Love, ‘Raul Prebisch and the Origins of the Doctrine of Unequal Exchange’.

¹⁸⁵ Love, *Crafting the Third World*, 165–70.

¹⁸⁶ Love, ‘Modeling Internal Colonialism’.

¹⁸⁷ Prado, ‘História de um não-debate: a trajetória da teoria marxista da dependência no Brasil [History of a non-debate: trajectory of the Marxist theory of Dependency in Brazil]’; Kay, *Latin American Theories of Development and Underdevelopment*; Love, ‘Raul Prebisch and the Origins of the Doctrine of Unequal Exchange’.

¹⁸⁸ Higginbottom, ‘Underdevelopment as Super-Exploitation: Marini’s Political Economic Thought Revisited’; Marini, *Subdesarrollo y Revolución*.

development and clarification of Marini's claims¹⁸⁹. Contrary to Furtado, Marini embraced revolutionary politics: at this time – alongside other dependency theorists Vânia Bambirra and Theotônio dos Santos – he was involved in militant Marxist movements in Brazil. Castro was involved in these debates from the beginning, but his work cannot be placed simply across a Marxist / structuralist divide. He notes, for instance, in a letter to the Secretary General of the FAO in May 1953, that there had just been a meeting of the UN Economic Commission for Latin America (CEPAL) in Brazil. CEPAL was the core of dependency thinking, and Furtado and Prebisch were working there at the time. Castro wrote that he was encouraged that 'the lines of economic policy laid out for Latin America were closer to the FAO point of view than was ever possible before. Problems of agriculture were brought out more than previously, when it sometimes seemed as though industry and commerce were the only things worth considering'¹⁹⁰. We can see that the fault-lines of his debate with Furtado had been laid for a number of years.

SUDENE's own attempt to re-found material relations between the Northeast and the Centre-South came across resistance. In Parliament this resistance was, in Oliveira's analysis, 'an admirable reflection of the different social classes', so did not line up in straightforward spatial terms: the most fervent opposition to SUDENE was from Northeastern politicians¹⁹¹, who had long had a conflictual relationship with national, infrastructure-driven drought agencies¹⁹². These agencies' capacity to bridge state lines and invest in large-scale reservoir, irrigation and transport projects challenged state-level authorities, and their support from politicians fluctuated¹⁹³. In the mid 1950s Castro sought to bring together a unified Northeastern voice in the national Parliament but little came of the project as regional unity was always partial (his role in a Nationalist grouping of deputies was more lasting)¹⁹⁴. One of SUDENE's tools in overcoming parliamentary opposition was its Council, which included governors from across the Northeast. It was a political tool (again in Haesbaert's terms) for a new kind of state project, integrating functions of the federal and state governments¹⁹⁵. In Oliveira's analysis, SUDENE attempted to make the state a productive force in the Northeast through novel combinations of capital underpinned by the coercive power of the state¹⁹⁶. Oliveira was inspired by Gramsci, and his spatial understanding of class and state relations recalls recent political ecological approaches, deploying a Gramscian understanding of the state apparatus as 'a material form that condenses the balance of social

¹⁸⁹ Dussel, *Towards an Unknown Marx*, 209–12.

¹⁹⁰ Castro, 'To FAO Secretary General from Josué de Castro'.

¹⁹¹ Oliveira, *Elegia para uma Re(li)gião*, 115–16.

¹⁹² Buckley, 'Drought'.

¹⁹³ Buckley, *Technocrats*.

¹⁹⁴ Melo and Neves, *Josué de Castro*, 89–90.

¹⁹⁵ Cohn, *Crise Regional e Planejamento* [Regional Crisis and Planning], 151.

¹⁹⁶ Oliveira, *Elegia para uma Re(li)gião*, 116.

forces and, as such, is the outcome of struggle'¹⁹⁷. Miguel Arraes – with whom Oliveira was in correspondence over political strategy in exile¹⁹⁸ – saw in this a national political struggle between two sections of the bourgeoisie: one oriented towards international capital, the other towards national popular movements. The regional question was one factor in a conjuncture with uneven effects across national territory, but Castro insisted that the problem of the Northeast was precisely about scale. The problem must be confronted not 'in its regional aspect, in its local singularity, but [...] in its correlation with the problem of the cost of living and the social and economic crisis of the whole country'¹⁹⁹. Elsewhere he insists on the regional and the singular in the Northeast, but these two positions are absolutely coherent. As Rezende has put it recently, Castro argued that 'the condition of underdevelopment would only be overcome through a national project whose basic guidelines were a distribution of incomes, increase in productivity, correction of regional inequality, removing archaic agricultural structures and rural land ownership, and establishing economic equilibrium between agricultural and industrial production'²⁰⁰.

But while these debates played out in the 1950s, the Northeast was also becoming a locus for cold war politics. The region was being inserted into an international scale. Thanks to anti-communist fervour, breathless foreign correspondents, Brazilian military machinations and cold war obsessions, an atmosphere of trepidation about the Northeast grew in Washington DC²⁰¹. To some limited extent their assessment of the Peasant Leagues as a communist, or at least Castroist, threat was justified: Alexina Crespo, an important, militant, leader in the Leagues, described a visit to China to petition Mao Tse Tung for arms, and she and her husband Francisco Julião visited Cuba to get Castro's support²⁰², and used the Cuban revolution to rally support for the Peasant Leagues²⁰³. But the paranoia was vastly overblown. American interventionism enabled the Brazilian right to concoct the need for a military coup. Even prior to this, though, the US had engaged in a battle of aid vs development with SUDENE. Celso Furtado was invited to the White House to meet President John F Kennedy, Henry Kissinger visited the Northeast²⁰⁴ and Kennedy sent his own brother, Ted, to visit in 1961²⁰⁵. This visit is a remarkable moment: he was escorted to the Engenho Galiléia by Celso Furtado, who translated between

¹⁹⁷ Angel, 'Towards an Energy Politics In-Against-and-Beyond the State', 561.

¹⁹⁸ Arraes, 'Caro Chico | Letter to Francisco de Oliveira'.

¹⁹⁹ Castro, Documentário Do Nordeste, 93–94.

²⁰⁰ Rezende, 'Colonialismo, subdesenvolvimento e fome em Josué de Castro', 240.

²⁰¹ Santiago, *Pernambuco em chamas*; Pereira, 'God, the Devil, and Development in Northeast Brazil', 1–3.

²⁰² Flávio José Gomes Cabral, Maria da Glória Dias Medeiros and AH da Silva Araújo, 'Lugar de mulher', 1207–8; Stédile, *A questão agrária no Brasil*.

²⁰³ Pereira, 'O Declínio das Ligas Camponesas', 249.

²⁰⁴ Oliveira, *Elegia para uma Re(li)gião*, 120.

²⁰⁵ Pereira, 'God, the Devil, and Development in Northeast Brazil', 5–8.

him and the peasants who had only recently expropriated their land. The clean-cut symbol of American empire met the bare-footed peasant, mediated by the emerging Third World intellectual and Marxist technocrat. Furtado's translation, in this moment, is much more than linguistic. If there is a moment in which translation is both partial and political it was this. What did Kennedy understand of these peasants, recently organized, still desperately poor? What did the peasants, on their liberated land, make of this American, with his promises of a generator – a promise delivered, and then symbolically, left to rust as there was no fuel to run it? (Sarah Sarzynski's new book reports that it is still there, though the gift is attributed to the wrong Kennedy²⁰⁶.) What did they make, indeed, of the sharp-suited Furtado? They were used to visiting intellectuals from the capital, not far distant: Josué de Castro had been there, with Francisco Julião, just a few months before. In any case, the cold war played out in a cane field, and translation took place. In spite of these American shows of friendliness in the Northeast, a few months later Teddy's brother, Bobby, visited Rio de Janeiro to insist, unsuccessfully, that Goulart purge the leftists from his government. One of the American demands was that Celso Furtado be removed as head of SUDENE²⁰⁷. On this Goulart demurred.

In spite of protestations in favour of dialogue and support, the Americans' aid plans – devised by economist Merwin Bohan – sat uncomfortably alongside SUDENE's, and relations soured²⁰⁸. Bohan, claiming to be a neutral economist, proposed American sponsored militias to combat the Peasant Leagues²⁰⁹. The Americans sought to enrol the Northeast in broader international struggles in particular ways. Both USAID and the CIA established large presences in Recife²¹⁰. The city was a vibrant political and cultural centre at the time under the jurisdiction of the radical Arraes government. It hosted Paulo Freire's radical plans to mobilize and educate the Northeastern masses²¹¹. Germano Coelho, the head of the city's Popular Cultural Movement called the American presence 'a silent invasion'²¹², and reportedly licenced an exhibition of anti-American cartoons in February 1963, to the consternation of the Americans in Recife²¹³.

The task of these US deployments was to halt the advance of leftist politics in the Northeast. The vehicle for this project – as well as directly funding Arraes' political opponents²¹⁴ – was the Alliance for Progress. The US targeted aid at the scale of the region. Up until the coup these competing visions of

²⁰⁶ Sarzynski, *Revolution in the Terra Do Sol*.

²⁰⁷ Santiago, *Pernambuco em chamas*, 147.

²⁰⁸ US Department of State, 'Report on SUDENE'.

²⁰⁹ Oliveira, *Noiva da revolução/Elegia para uma re(li)gião* [Fiancée of the revolution / Elegy for a re(li)gion], 27.

²¹⁰ Page, *The Revolution That Never Was*.

²¹¹ Kirkendall, 'Entering History'.

²¹² Santiago, *Pernambuco em chamas*, 155.

²¹³ US Department of State, 'Anti-American Art'.

²¹⁴ Page, *Santiago*

aid and economic development co-existed, alongside and underneath the turbulent motions of national politics. In 1964, the nationalist left emphatically lost. Miguel Arraes tried to resist the coup, holed up in the Governor's palace. But the military gathered outside and Arraes was deposed, arrested and sent straight into custody on the island of Fernando de Noronha.

In 1965, after the coup, another Kennedy – Bobby, this time – landed in Recife. He visited the *Zona da Mata* (though not with the exiled Furtado) and declared that the Northeast was the 'region [that] symbolized the embodiment of the Alliance for Progress as a whole'²¹⁵. This kind of vernacular regional imagination tells us more about cold war politics than about the geographical construction of the region as a socio-natural territory. However, these multiple scales of political thought and action – international forces of US development politics, translated through local aid interventions – functioned, too, to produce the region as region. The Northeast was not only the field of intervention for SUDENE's enlightened technocrats, but it was also a space which Cold War grand strategists could think with. The arid Northeast was a convenience of mind for Kennedy to articulate how US power could be projected through international aid. For the generals of the Brazilian military the Northeast was a bridgehead against communism and a key site of national defence in alliance with North American military allies²¹⁶. The region, in these modes of thought, is a kind of laboratory. Kennedy was speaking in 1965. The coup had not brought an end to SUDENE's work – developmentalism and authoritarianism are familiar bedfellows – but it aligned it with the US politics of aid, and skinned it of radical potential for meaningful changes for the people of the Northeast.

By 1970 Castro argued that the Northeast continued to be the key point of extraction for foreign, particularly US, capital. The tax incentives SUDENE had planned had been turned towards inciting foreign investment and deepening the Northeast's economic dependency both in terms of the national and international economies²¹⁷. Castro had initially greeted the Alliance for Progress signed in Punta del Este in 1961 with cautious open-mindedness. The document contained good intentions. Soon, though, he was one of the most trenchant critics of the type of international development the Alliance deployed and stood for. In a public debate in October 1964 (shortly before Bobby Kennedy's visit) he joked that Brazil was the only Latin American country in which the Alliance actually did what its name suggested. In Portuguese the '*Aliança para o Progresso*' has a double meaning: *para* means both 'for,' and 'stops': 'the Alliance stops Progress'²¹⁸. Castro's critique is excoriating: the Alliance leads to a 'colonial type' of progress, propping up elites and the very structures which cause the continent's underdevelopment. This critique was part of Castro's broader, anti-colonial censure of the development

²¹⁵ quoted in Quoted in Santiago, *Pernambuco em chamas*, 187.

²¹⁶ Castro, 'Draft Note for French edition of Death in the Northeast'.

²¹⁷ Castro.

²¹⁸ Yves Jouffa, Claude Julien, Mario Vargas Llosa, Juan Arcocha & Josué de Castro, *Ou En Est La Révolution En Amérique Latine? Débat Publique*.

industry, which would come to fruition, as the last chapter will show, as an intervention into international environmental politics. It was a critique founded, once again, at the scale of the region and in the light of the Northeast. In considering the question of the intellectual in the next chapter I will return again to the potentials and pitfalls of understanding the Northeast through the prism of Cuba.

Conclusion

The idea of the underdeveloped region – emerging in Castro’s work from his regional geography of hunger – was worked through and fought over in a particularly molten period of Brazilian political and intellectual life between 1955 and 1964. The Northeast was deployed as a piece of ‘political hardware’ by counter-acting forces, just as it was being re-theorized and re-constructed by others. The Northeast was not a settled bundle of space and nature, but a profoundly significant geography over which radical, national developmentalist and international imperialist forces did battle.

The Northeast, I have suggested, was also an important space through which the ideas of dependency theory developed. Various figures from dependency theory, such as Aníbal Quijano, have flitted in and out of anglophone geography. More deserve to be reconsidered, such as Celso Furtado, Vânia Bambirra²¹⁹ and Ruy Mauro Marini²²⁰. Other critical thinkers of and from the Northeast do not fall into the *dependentista* tendency but, likewise, have an enormous amount to offer anglophone geographical thought: I have only been able to scratch the surface here. This chapter suggests that the genesis of underdevelopment and dependency theory played out in the Northeast of Brazil, through struggles in which Castro was deeply involved. Certainly the Northeast was crucial to Castro’s thought, not least on underdevelopment. He went on to teach the Northeast as ‘a demonstrative zone of Latin-American underdevelopment’ in Paris²²¹. Castro continued to develop approaches to dependent economic forms in regional terms in the late 1960s, in relation not only to the Northeast but the Amazon²²². He continued to argue for investment in agriculture and the internal market. I will return to this in the coming chapters.

If, as Power and Sidaway suggest, Milton Santos is one agent through which dependency ideas entered geography²²³, Castro, on the other hand, was an agent through which geographical ideas entered dependency theory. Castro largely has no place in later intellectual histories of dependency theory²²⁴,

²¹⁹ Prado, ‘Vânia Bambirra’.

²²⁰ Higginbottom, ‘The Political Economy of Foreign Investment in Latin America’; Higginbottom, ‘Underdevelopment as Super-Exploitation: Marini’s Political Economic Thought Revisited’; Sotelo Valencia, ‘Latin America’.

²²¹ Castro, ‘U.V. Geographie de l’Alimentation (ii)’.

²²² Castro, ‘Draft Edits to Geopolitics of Hunger’; Castro, ‘Sketch of Amazon Book Project’.

²²³ Power and Sidaway, ‘The Degeneration of Tropical Geography’.

²²⁴ eg Kay, *Latin American Theories of Development and Underdevelopment*.

in spite of the role outlined here in debates over the region, national developmentalism and underdevelopment²²⁵. Dependency theorists themselves, however, often cited him in the 1950s-70s. Beyond the exchanges with Furtado, Theotônio dos Santos put Castro's 'extremely modern' work within a group of Brazilian scholars who influenced him, and the latter even organized an 'international year of Josué de Castro'²²⁶. Paul Baran, who gave a seminar at SUDENE in its early years, makes reference to Josué de Castro in his *Political Economy of Growth*²²⁷, and Argentinian Raúl Prebisch, author of dependency's 'manifesto'²²⁸, was in contact with Castro from the 50s to the 70s, and they collaborated on various projects²²⁹. Placing Castro in this context draws out the political content of his writing. It emphasizes the geographical content of dependency theory itself. It does so, in particular, through the question of the region. We can see that by the early 1970s the Northeast of Brazil was an important exemplar and point of debate in the emergence of critical geography, meriting a long discussion, which references Castro, in the first of David Slater's two papers on 'Geography and Underdevelopment' in 1973²³⁰. Slater falls somewhat short of integrating Northeastern thought into geography, but does use it to expose the fallacies of then mainstream theories of regional underdevelopment.

How, then, might this intellectual history point towards ways of understanding afresh the region in political ecology? It is to suggest, firstly, that the region is, as Haesbaert has it, an arte-fact: a dialectical combination of imaginary and material geographies. This proposes that regional political ecologies take into account how that scale is itself the product of arte-factual production. If the region is produced, in part, by the infrastructural politics of the state, understood as an outcome of struggle, then political ecologies of infrastructure need to take into account regional dynamics. These are both relational and specific: the political ecology of infrastructures are emergent from, and productive of, particular hierarchical relations across national territory. Understanding agrarian reform in the Northeast, for example, requires understanding the mediating power of the idea of the region itself. The way in which space and nature is divided up and struggled over, and how that manifests in people's bodies – the geography of hunger – is the product not only of colonial histories of land and nature, but the extended, relational, arte-factual region itself. The Northeast as a form of periphery to the centre of the centre-south – the dependency paradigm at another scale – forged the political ecologies, and metabolic

²²⁵ Rezende, 'Colonialismo, subdesenvolvimento e fome em Josué de Castro'; Andrade, 'Josué de Castro'; Magalhães, *Fome: uma (re)leitura de Josué de Castro* [*Hunger: a (re)reading of Josué de Castro*].

²²⁶ Santos, *Teoría de La Dependencia*; Santos, 'O grito que não foi ouvido'.

²²⁷ Baran, *The Political Economy of Growth*, 279.

²²⁸ Kay, *Latin American Theories of Development and Underdevelopment*.

²²⁹ eg Castro, *La Encrucijada*.

²³⁰ Slater, 'Geography and Underdevelopment'.

geographies, of everyday life for Northeasterners. As Erik Swyngedouw argued, the metabolic politics of hydro-statecraft in Spain show that

‘every political project is also an environmental project, but also how such socio-environmental projects are predicated upon scalar tactics and strategies. The political and the technical, the social and the natural, become mobilized through socio-spatial arrangements that shape distinct geographies and landscapes; landscapes that celebrate the visions of the elite networks, reveal the scars suffered by the disempowered and nurture the possibilities and dreams for alternative visions’²³¹.

The region is an important and powerful part of scalar strategies, and also – in the case of the Northeast, certainly – not merely reducible to them. Milton Santos wrote that, what we can call a radical regionalism, ‘endures [...] as a seed for our thought and our action; a seed for our anguish, but also for our hope’²³². There can be something special about regions.

Calling for a Gramscian approach to political ecology, Joel Wainwright insists that there is a responsibility to engage with the colonial experience. This chapter has attempted to present an alternative intellectual history for political ecology populated by scholars, in this case from the Brazilian Northeast, who have long thought deeply about the colonial experience, the imperialist expansion of capitalism and uneven development. Many of them became exiles, forced to think about their own region, the Northeast, from afar. In the next chapter I will think through the personal and public geographies of this intellectual condition. I suggest that how this period in the Northeast was later interpreted also has something to offer critical geographical thought. As Milton Santos put it, writing in the late 1990s, ‘the region still exists, it’s just more complex than ever’²³³.

²³¹ Swyngedouw, ‘Technonatural Revolutions’, 24.

²³² Santos, ‘O Futuro Do Nordeste’, 100.

²³³ Santos, *A natureza do espaço*, 166.

Chapter Five: The Question of the Intellectual: Region, Nation, Exile

'the point of theory is to travel, always to move beyond its confinements, to emigrate, to remain in a sense in exile'

Edward Said¹

Introduction

It was first and foremost as an intellectual that Josué de Castro conducted his political militancy against hunger. He was a particular kind of intellectual at a particular moment: a regional thinker, a radical utopian and an anti-imperialist, but with a modernist faith in the redemptive power of international institutions and the possibilities of global intellectual civil society. He lived out a very particular trajectory available only in a precise historical moment: a third worldist anti-colonial and a militant institutional intellectual. In this chapter I want to think through the geographies of Castro's intellectualism, to explore the valencies of geography's political possibilities.

I approach critical analysis of the question of the intellectual in twentieth century Western thought as having two prevailing dimensions. Firstly, analysis of their role in society and their position as a class. Secondly, the individual characteristics of intellectual work and the responsibility, interpretation and engagement that it implies. For Edward Said, the intellectual is committed to human freedom and aligned with popular movements. The true intellectual nevertheless holds to the dictum: never solidarity before critique². Marilena Chauí has a slightly different understanding, seeing the 'two fundamental characteristics' of the intellectual as the 'defense of *universal causes*, namely those separate from personal interests, and the *transgression* of the dominant order'³. The question of the nature of commitment will underpin this chapter. Castro himself was clear that the intellectual must be committed: 'I don't believe', he wrote 'in any science independent from reality and the social context'⁴. Paying attention to his at times vain (in both senses of the word) efforts to be a public geographical intellectual can help us modulate received understandings of the geographies of intellectual life. By geographies here I mean two things: firstly the spaces through which engaged intellectual practice takes place, and secondly the role of intellectual practice in producing particular kinds of space. In Gramscian

¹ Said, *Reflections*, 451.

² Said, *Representations*.

³ Chauí, *Between Conformity and Resistance*, 15.

⁴ Castro, 'Panorama'.

terms, intellectuals are important elements in the elaboration of hegemony. As Joel Wainwright puts it, hegemony is ‘doubly geographical [...] constituted on the basis of spatial relations, and such relations become hegemonic as geographies are naturalized as common sense through political and cultural practices’⁵. I will explore Castro’s geographical intellectual practice firstly through continuing to explore the question of the region, and the intellectual as a conductor of scalar politics. Secondly, through the articulations of commitment at the national and international scale, and finally in terms of the spatial distentions of exile.

‘No-one has any idea, today, of the importance of Josué. In the fifties and the sixties [...] Josué was one of the five most important people in all of humanity,’ and the most prominent intellectual figure in the country, pronounced Darcy Ribeiro, the anthropologist, politician and founder of the University of Brasília, in 1995⁶. This should not be taken as a statement of fact, but it reiterates why Castro’s lack of incorporation into ‘global’ histories of critical geography remains a conundrum. As this thesis has shown, though Castro has had some renown in Brazilian and French geography, it hardly matches Ribeiro’s assessment. Castro is one of a relatively small group of geographers with such a prominent, inter-disciplinary, public role in Western intellectual life in the twentieth century. Indeed, if we are to take Chauí’s definition – that the true intellectual is both dissonant and committed to human freedom – then he is in a much smaller group. Similarly public geographers before him – we might list Richard Hartshorne, Ellen Semple, Friedrich Ratzel, Isaiah Bowman or Vidal de la Blache – did not perform such humanist dissonance. Castro disowned and counteracted the long-established association between geography and imperial power⁷. In a similar, if inverse, way to Neil Smith’s work on Isaiah Bowman, Castro’s career tells an important story about the twentieth century, as well as about the discipline of geography. The question of the intellectual has been fiercely debated in the fields of cultural studies and social theory⁸, but relatively little theorising of the formation, role and antinomies of the public intellectual exists in geography⁹. Noel Castree has argued, cautiously, that ‘the (Left) geographer as public intellectual is not [...] infeasible’¹⁰. Josué de Castro performed what Castree has called a ‘critical public geography’¹¹, but this seems not to have enhanced his standing in geography. Castro enacted the role of the left geographer as public intellectual, with all of the compromises, incoherences, achievements, hypocrisies and vanities performing it involved.

⁵ Wainwright, ‘The Geographies of Political Ecology’, 1037.

⁶ Tendler, Josué de Castro - Cidadão do Mundo.

⁷ Smith, ‘Geography, Empire and Social Theory’; Livingstone, *The Geographical Tradition*; Smith, *American Empire*.

⁸ See for example Collini, “‘Every Fruit-Juice Drinker...’”; Bourdieu, ‘The Intellectual Field’.

⁹ For exceptions see Ward, “‘Public Intellectuals’”, *Geography, Its Representations and Its Publics*; Ward, ‘Geography and Public Policy’; Castree, ‘Geography’s New Public Intellectuals?’; Fuller, ‘Public Geographies’.

¹⁰ Castree, ‘Geography’s New Public Intellectuals?’, 408.

¹¹ Castree, 409.

From an early age Castro sought out public platforms. His institutional and political roles were often vehicles for a process of self-fashioning as a public intellectual that was contingent upon contested access to mobility, audiences and institutions. His prominence fluctuated. Exile led to exclusion from both specialized and popular publics in Brazil. This did not, however, lead him to abdicate the path of public intellectual; on the contrary, in the last nine years of his life Castro fought against exclusion and strategically opened new audiences. In many ways these were the most prolific years of his writing and speaking, certainly in international contexts. Castro spoke in gendered terms of the intellectual: ‘I don’t believe in non-engaged sociology. The sociologist is a man, so he is irremediably engaged’¹². This gendered language is in spite of the female public intellectuals – Pearl Buck, Rachel de Queiroz and Simone de Beauvoir,¹³ for instance – whom he saw as mentors and interlocutors. Castro was also more than happy to call himself economist, doctor or sociologist depending on the circumstances. Though his academic practice always remained geographical, it was geography as a means, not as an end. That is, he was less interested in the institutional frameworks of disciplinary geography than in what geographical method could do for his ideas.

Castro moved in the same circles as some of the most influential intellectuals of the twentieth century, not only in Brazil, as previous chapters have outlined, but in Europe, including Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir.¹⁴ These were also key figures in a self-reflexive moment interrogating the role of the intellectual in anti-imperialist struggles¹⁵. Castro himself explored the question of intellectual responsibility frequently and one of Sartre’s important reflections on the question – revolving around the Bertrand Russell Peace Tribunal – was published in the anti-colonial *Tricontinental* magazine alongside Castro’s own article, ‘The Significance of the Brazilian Economic Phenomenon’¹⁶. For a time, Castro was written about in breathless terms by newspapers and magazines. He was interviewed for television and radio broadcasts and invited to speak all over the world. He made programmes for French National Television. He was friends with the most internationally prominent writers and intellectuals from across Latin America, including the Brazilian novelist Guimarães Rosa¹⁷ and the Guatemalan Nobel Laureate Miguel Angel Asturias¹⁸. His name was regularly discussed in relation to the Nobel Prize and he was invited to sit on groups such as Bertrand Russell’s International Tribunal to investigate US war crimes in Vietnam¹⁹, and a nuclear Disarmament Committee including Albert

¹² Castro, ‘Panorama’.

¹³ Signed edition

¹⁴ Castro, ‘Une Zone Explosive (Signed)’.

¹⁵ Said, *Representations*, 13.

¹⁶ Castro, ‘Significance’; Sartre, ‘De Nuremberg a Estocolmo’.

¹⁷ Rosa, ‘To Josué de Castro: “meu caro Embaixador e querido Amigo”’.

¹⁸ Asturias, *Latino America*.

¹⁹ For which Yves Lacoste also worked Bowd and Clayton, ‘Geographical Warfare in the Tropics’, 631.

Schweitzer, Russell, Sartre, Eleanor Roosevelt, Ilia Ehrenbourg and others²⁰. He was the subject of hundreds of profiles and interviews in newspapers and magazines throughout Latin America, Europe, the Soviet Union and beyond from the late 1940s through to the early 1970s. These often took on a hagiographic tone, casting Castro as a ‘universal’ figure and a ‘citizen of the world.’²¹

He used public platforms to campaign against hunger²². He had what Edward Said called the intellectual’s ‘vocation for the art of representing’²³. Not only was he an effective communicator in both written and spoken forms, but he thought deeply about his audiences, for example seeking to bring the ‘geography of hunger’ to cinema through abortive attempts to work first with Charlie Chaplin then Roberto Rossellini and Cesare Zavattini²⁴. He wrote to Chaplin asking him to film the geography of hunger ‘both for his creative genius and for the interest he has always shown [in] the artistic representation of the tragedy of hunger’²⁵. Notwithstanding the force of Chaplin’s bodily performance, Castro wrote to him, Chaplin had ‘never entirely penetrated [hunger’s] essence to show, through his human substance, all the social implications which this tragedy contains’²⁶. Castro proposed that they worked together to provide Chaplin with a vector for expressing his own conception of hunger²⁷. This returns me to the discussion of hunger in Chapter One: of hunger as bodily suffering and as social calamity. Castro’s interest in the dumb power of Chaplin’s art reiterates the Brazilian’s attention to this duality, and to the representation of suffering. The film never came off, and nor did the long and tortuous negotiations with Rossellini – including a trip to Brazil by the Italian and years of scripts, letters and fundraising²⁸. Nevertheless, Castro had a significant power to convene not only powerful political and scientific, but cultural figures. But, as the last chapter explored, Castro always felt provincial. Underpinning his self-conception as an intellectual was his own personal geography, and the Northeast. It is to the oscillation between his different geographical scales of practice, and vectors of commitment, that I now turn.

²⁰ eg Anonymous, ‘Josué de Castro voltou de Londres: um “Comité” pró-desarmamento nuclear’.

²¹ See for example ‘Conversacion con Josué de Castro’. *El Dia*, Mexico. 23rd July 1965, or ‘Josué de Castro, un Brasileño Universal’. *El Nacional*. Caracas. 16th August 1965 or ‘Une Jeunesse “Revolutionnaire”’. *Témoignage Chrétien*. 27th May 1965.

²² The files of newspaper clippings in his archive show this over and over again, eg Various, ‘Newspaper Clippings 1959 (i)’; Various, ‘Newspaper Clippings 1961: Northeast’.

²³ Said, *Representations*, 10.

²⁴ Cassarini, *Miraggio di un film*.

²⁵ Reprinted in Magno, Tânia Elias, *Memória Do Saber*, 149.

²⁶ Reprinted in Magno, Tânia Elias, 149.

²⁷ See also Castro, ‘Letter from Josué de Castro to Charlie Chaplin’.

²⁸ Cassarini, *Miraggio di un film*.

A. The Regional-National Intellectual: 1952-64

As the previous chapter outlined, Castro was one of many Northeastern politically engaged intellectuals working in the mid-20th century. His career had important intersections, in particular, with Celso Furtado particularly in the decade leading up to the coup of 1964. Of the Northeast, and Brazil, in 1964, Furtado wrote in the preface to his *Diagnosis of the Brazilian Crisis* that

‘the intellectual has a particular social responsibility, being, as he is, the only element in society who not only can, but should, place himself above the more immediate social conditioners of individual behaviour. This permits him to move on a higher plane of rationality and invests him with a very special responsibility: the responsibility of intelligence [...] Because he has this responsibility, the intellectual cannot refuse to see further than group loyalties or cultural ties allow. [He has a] supreme commitment [...] to the dignity of the human being – an inalienable attribute of the intellectual’s very being’²⁹.

Furtado published his works on the Northeast ‘with the intention of promoting an intellectual mobilization of the Left’³⁰. This preface tells us a lot about Furtado and the SUDENE project. His arch-rationalist, economistic, technocratic tendencies are balanced by a commitment to universal principles. Castro takes a stronger position, ‘committed to a partisan and progressive point of view. I deplore things as they are, and my deepest desire is to see them changed and improved’³¹. Writing on this period in the Northeast has a particular tenor of commitment. Francisco de Oliveira’s *Elegia para uma Re(li)gião*, published in 1977, recalls that Oliveira wrote about the period: ‘under the sign of passion: passion for Orieta, for the Northeast, passion for the workers, labourers and peasants of the Northeast. Passion in the broadest and narrowest senses.’ Oliveira’s analytical drive is a ‘passion in the sense of Gramsci: of putting oneself in the way of things, and through this positioning, and because of this positioning, to try to understand a tragedy’³². Here we can recall Gramsci’s connection of the region to the question of intellectuals. The parallels between the Mezzogiorno and the Northeast are profound³³. Oliveira goes on: ‘neutrality does not exist in the social sciences, for which reason I prefer to follow Gramsci’s advice: to take a position and, adopting it as a point of departure, to set in motion the theoretical-analytical elements of an interpretation’³⁴. This expresses Castro’s own intellectual commitment, beginning from

²⁹ Furtado. *Diagnosis*, xii

³⁰ Furtado. xiii

³¹ Castro, *Death in the Northeast*, 4.

³² Oliveira, *Elegia para uma Re(li)gião*, 13.

³³ see for example Santos, ‘Questão Nordestina’; Pereira and Pereira, ‘A Questão Regional No Pensamento de Antonio Gramsci e Celso Furtado’.

³⁴ Oliveira, ‘The Lenin Moment’, 109.

the Northeast and a humanist position radically opposed to hunger. The representation of hunger constituted the pith of his political struggle.

The question of the intellectual has overwhelmingly been figured as national. Questions of commitment, dissonance and engagement address the scale of the nation³⁵. But, as the previous chapter suggested, that the nation was not the only scale which Castro (and others) navigated as an intellectual, and it is not the only scale that he helped to produce. In order to explore this dual question – the space of the intellectual, and the space intellectuals produce – I want to turn to Antonio Gramsci, as a spatial thinker³⁶. It is in the context of investigating the region – the socio-spatial dimensions of hegemony – that some of Gramsci's most important reflections on the intellectual emerge. 'Some Aspects of the Southern Question,' 'emphasis[es] the rootedness (or otherwise) of social classes and political and intellectual forces in specific places, spaces and scales of economic and social life'³⁷.

David Featherstone argues that Gramsci 'situates the formation of solidarities and identities in relation to dynamic, ongoing, uneven development of northern and southern Italy and engages with both the cultural and political character of that inequality'³⁸. Featherstone explores the profoundly geographical terms of solidarities in Gramsci's work. This requires the detailed historiographical tracing of influence, and the analysis and valorization of translation, not only as a linguistic, but a historical practice. This is – as I attempted in Chapter Three – also a question of following theories as they travel and become new forms of solidarity, re-articulating contexts in relation to one another, in particular historical geographies. Gramsci configures the intellectual – and translation – as key to how regions are constructed as such, and how they act as conduits through which historical blocs are continually under formation. Linking the regional question and the question of intellectuals engages the geographies of knowledge production with the geographies that knowledge produces. Intellectual practice takes place within and through particular geographies, and plays a part in producing space. Where Said emphasizes the consistently problematic negotiations of national commitment,³⁹ Gramsci also opens out the question of the intellectual's regional commitment. This is significant not least because of the reams of intellectual work which have unwound from the bobbin of Gramsci's essay, which sits at the base of subaltern studies⁴⁰. Nevertheless, while the questions of the nation and the intellectual have been resolutely woven together, the question of the region and the intellectual have been less tightly spun.

³⁵ eg the influential Bhabha, *Nation and Narration*.

³⁶ See Loftus et al., *Gramsci*; Jessop, 'Gramsci as a Spatial Theorist'.

³⁷ Jessop, 'Gramsci as a Spatial Theorist', 424.

³⁸ Featherstone, "'Gramsci in Action': Space, Politics, and the Making of Solidarities', 68.

³⁹ See for example Said, *Nationalism, Colonialism and Literature*.

⁴⁰ Spivak, 'Scattered Speculations on the Subaltern and the Popular'.

The spatiality of Castro's intellectual practice was distinctive: not a metropolitan urbanity, but a provincial globalism. For Castro, the Northeast was the defining geography of his intellectual practice: 'travelling all over the word, and seeking always to refresh my spirit with currents of thought that flow in all directions [...] I never stopped feeling like a provincial, with spirit and sentiment impregnated with the substance of the earth of the province [...] It is always possible, scraping back the superficial crust of appearances, to see appearing this same substance, that is made up of the human landscape of the Northeast'⁴¹. The region, therefore, is a key territory of identity, but not a fixed scale. It is also internally differentiated. For his part, Gramsci at once thinks about the South as a whole and emphasizes how different parts of the South relate to one another, and to the national⁴². As Jessop notes, 'Gramsci distinguished between the social functions of northern (industrial, technical) and southern (rural, organic) intellectuals in building different types of hegemony'⁴³. For instance, Gramsci wrote that Benedetto Croce, 'fulfilled an extremely important "national" function. He has detached the radical intellectuals of the South from the peasant masses, forcing them to take part in national and European culture; and through this culture, he has secured their absorption by the national bourgeoisie and hence by the agrarian bloc'⁴⁴. He noted that 'the Southern peasant is tied to the big landowner through the mediation of the intellectual [...] it creates a monstrous agrarian bloc which, as a whole, functions as the intermediary and the overseer of Northern capitalism and the big banks. Its single aim is to preserve the *status quo*'⁴⁵. He contends that 'the South can be defined as a great social disintegration [...] Southern society is a great agrarian bloc, made up of three social layers: the great amorphous disintegrated mass of the peasantry; the intellectuals of the petty and medium rural bourgeoisie; and the big landowners and great intellectuals'⁴⁶. It was the role of intellectuals – 'the few intelligent bourgeois' – to 'pose the Southern problem as a national problem'⁴⁷. This figures the regional intellectual as a conductor of scalar politics.

As outlined in the last chapter, in mid-twentieth century Brazil a few Northeastern intellectuals, including Castro, took up the role of posing the Northeast as a national problem. In his earlier thinking on development, Castro also drew on work on cultural landscapes and regional geography to argue that any projects for development needed to take not only national, but *regional* cultural and economic characteristics into account⁴⁸. He navigated between regional and national analysis. In 1955 he was part

⁴¹ Castro, *Documentário Do Nordeste*, 7–8.

⁴² See Morton, 'Traveling with Gramsci: The Spatiality of Passive Revolution', 47–48.

⁴³ Jessop, 'Gramsci as a Spatial Theorist', 428.

⁴⁴ Gramsci, 'Some Aspects of the Southern Question', 460.

⁴⁵ Gramsci, 457.

⁴⁶ Gramsci, 454.

⁴⁷ Gramsci, 457.

⁴⁸ Castro, 'Regionalismo e Paisagem Cultural'.

of the founding group of the important progressive Paulista journal the *Revista Brasiliense* which asserted the need to address ‘national, not regional problems’⁴⁹. But Chilcote’s account perhaps slightly simplifies this as a binary: the issue at stake was of interpreting and acting upon scales in relation to one another, not prioritising one over the other. Caio Prado Junior was a particularly influential figure there, and his core arguments with regards the colonial roots of the modern Brazilian economy helped shape Castro’s approach. Between 1952 and 1960 his political activity inside Brazil was intense. He was a Federal Deputy for Pernambuco and involved in various projects for national reform. He did not publish any major original works in this period: he released *Geopolítica da Fome* in 1951, and *Death in the Northeast* would not emerge until 1965. He did publish collections of essays, and substantially updated *A Geografia da Fome* in 1959-60 to publish what he called a ‘definitive’ edition⁵⁰. As extracts from his 1957 diary show, he felt he had no time to write, as he was constantly pulled by political demands⁵¹. He was profoundly disenchanted by domestic politics, and what he saw as the dishonesty and vaingloriousness of political life in Brazil⁵². These personal struggles came up against a public profile. Castro had appeared to be hand-picked by João Goulart – the head of Castro’s own *Partido Trabalhista do Brasil* and candidate for the vice-Presidency – to run for mayor of Recife. This prospect had first arisen in 1955, when Goulart publicly supported Castro for the post⁵³, and in 1958 there was talk of a Castro-Julião slate in Recife, a prospect which grew more serious in 1959-60⁵⁴. Castro also considered running for Governor of Pernambuco⁵⁵. In 1960 this would have meant Castro running against Miguel Arraes. Conflicting reports surmised that Castro was toying with the candidacy in order to help Arraes by muddying the waters of his rivals⁵⁶. In the end, to much public surprise, he withdrew⁵⁷.

Castro was moved to justify his involvement in party machinations. He declared in the Northeastern press that he withdrew because he had no political desire for the post, and did not believe that the mayoralty had the necessary power to fundamentally change conditions in Recife. Describing himself as a servant of the Northeast but also as a public intellectual, he preferred, he said, to stay in the national parliament⁵⁸. Indeed, the political situation in 1960 in Brazil was somewhat confused. There was a vicious competition to take over the mantle of Juscelino Kubitschek. The populist Jânio Quadros, who had risen from being mayor of São Paulo, stood for election at the head of a coalition against the PTB’s

⁴⁹ Chilcote, *Intellectuals*, 127.

⁵⁰ Castro, *Geografia Da Fome: O Dilema Brasileiro: Pão Ou Aço* 1965, 1:29.

⁵¹ Silva, ‘Josué por ele mesmo: o diário’, 40.

⁵² Silva, 39.

⁵³ Various, ‘Newspaper Clippings 1955’.

⁵⁴ Various, ‘Newspaper Clippings 1959 (i)’.

⁵⁵ Melo, ‘Josué Admite ser Candidate ao Governo [Josué admits being a candidate]’.

⁵⁶ Various, ‘Newspaper Clippings 1959 (i)’: ‘Josué Aceitou Candidatura: Duas Interpretações do Fato’.

⁵⁷ Various: ‘Jango no Recife: Josué o Candidate’.

⁵⁸ Various: *Diario de Pernambuco*, 16th June, p.1.

ill-fated candidate Marshal Henrique Lott. João Goulart, meanwhile, stood for the vice-Presidency on behalf of the PTB, the two posts being elected separately at the time. Castro was vice-President of the PTB, but he decided to support Quadros. In a sign both of his influence and of his vanity, after this decision Castro published an explanation of his actions as his '*Carta ao Povo do Nordeste*' [Letter to the People of the Northeast]. In addressing the *povo* Castro imagines his capacity to represent a particular public, and an accountability to it. Newspaper clippings of the time collected in his archive attest to a rolling daily interest in Castro's political positions, but the *Carta* was also a strategic document, in party political terms, addressed to his interlocutors, rivals and friends inside the party itself, justifying his decision to abandon loyalty.

The backdrop, Castro wrote in 1960, to his 'preaching' as a 'political militant' was always to denounce hunger⁵⁹. National attempts to tackle hunger had failed, he declared, and amounted to little more than paternalist assistencialism. 'As a man of study, concerned above all by our social problems, I have for some time sought to examine the candidates [...], their ideologies, their experience of social problems, how they address our sad reality, and the solutions that they are putting forward'⁶⁰. In the middle of his political ruminations, Castro wrote, Quadros made overtures to him and announced a true anti-hunger politics, with a focus on the Northeast. Indeed, Castro's archive includes letters between them discussing the contents of this plan⁶¹. Castro declared that he would support Quadros 'to serve the Northeast in order to better serve Brazil'⁶². He noted that whilst some may be annoyed by his choice to abandon party commitment, he himself was driven by a higher purpose. In the trilogy of party, nation and region, region is first, nation second and party a relatively distant last.

In the end, Quadros was elected. His principal achievements were in foreign policy, aligning Brazil with Cuba. As President of the Brazilian Commission for Solidarity with the Cuban People, Castro influenced Quadros along these anti-imperialist lines⁶³. While supportive, particularly of Quadros' foreign policy, Castro continued to critique Quadros while he was in power⁶⁴. After a brief term, Quadros abruptly resigned. His intention may have been to shore up his authority, but it spectacularly backfired, and João Goulart became President under a new Parliamentary system. Goulart intended to appoint Castro as Minister of Agriculture, a post Castro had long desired. He was stopped, Darcy Ribeiro recalls – then Goulart's Chief of Staff – by members of his own party in the Northeast. They resented Castro's international profile, and argued that he was too often absent from the Northeast in

⁵⁹ Castro, '*Carta ao Povo do Nordeste*'.

⁶⁰ Castro.

⁶¹ Castro, 'To Deputado Jânio Quadros'.

⁶² Castro, '*Carta ao Povo do Nordeste*'.

⁶³ Castro, 'To Jânio Quadros: Cuba'.

⁶⁴ Various, 'Newspaper Clippings 1961: Northeast', 79.

the capital or on international trips⁶⁵. The regional, the national and the international could not as productively coexist in political practice as they did in political theory, and intellectual and political practice came into conflict at the scale of personal life.

This was a turbulent time in intellectual life in Brazil. Marilena Chauí narrates the social function of the intellectual in Brazil in the early 20th century as having three roles: ‘the formulation of power, as theologians and lawyers; the exercise of power, as members of a vast state bureaucracy and university hierarchy; and benefactors of the favors of power, as graduates and prestigious writers’⁶⁶. In Francisco de Oliveira’s account of the Northeast, *Elegia para uma Re(li)gião*, the political role of the *latifundia* and their regional bourgeois allies have echoes of Gramsci’s account of the *mezzogiorno*. But things changed as intellectuals played an important role in political ructions between 1956 and 1964. A class of leftist intellectuals gave themselves the role of the ‘advanced conscience’ of the people: *o povo*. The appeal to the *povo* was a geographically specific instance of the perennial idea of the intellectual as vanguard, or as true representative of the unrepresented masses. Appealing to ‘the people’, as Castro himself had done in his ‘*carta*’, was a widespread penchant of Latin American radicals in the period⁶⁷, and emphatically present in the Brazilian Northeast, where populist pomposity was brutally satirized, for instance, in Glauber Rocha’s *Terra em Transe* (1967). The ‘*povo*’ was used as a marker of a rhetorical commitment to the apparently awakening masses. The risks and failures of such associations in emancipatory and decolonization struggles are analysed by Frantz Fanon in ‘The Pitfalls of National Consciousness’, written in 1961: ‘the unpreparedness of the educated classes, the lack of practical links between them and the mass of the people, their laziness, and, let it be said, their cowardice at the decisive moment of the struggle will give rise to tragical mishaps’⁶⁸. This indictment of traditional intellectuals to some extent could describe Brazil in the period up to 1964. It recalls the weakness of some of the claims of Miguel Arraes’ 1969 *Brazil: The People and the Power* which overstate plausible links between ‘the mass of the people’ and the intellectual class⁶⁹. Fanon’s own ‘messianism’ has itself been accused of giving a ‘problematical’ and ‘impossible’ account of the mobilization of the Algerian people⁷⁰. In the Brazilian context, whilst there were attempts to build ‘practical links’ across class and the kind of bottom-to-top democracy Fanon espouses – Freire’s practiced theory of the pedagogy of the oppressed, for example – they were clearly not strong enough to resist the rupture of 1964.

⁶⁵ Tandler, Josué de Castro - Cidadão do Mundo.

⁶⁶ Chauí, *Between Conformity and Resistance*, 35.

⁶⁷ Dussel, ‘Transmodernity and Interculturality’; Dussel, *Politics of liberation*, 467–97, 528–40.

⁶⁸ Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*, 119.

⁶⁹ Arraes, *Brazil: The People and the Power*; See also Santana, ‘Elementos Para Uma Análise’.

⁷⁰ Lazarus, ‘National Consciousness and the Specificity of (Post)Colonial Intellectualism’, 200.

The role of the Brazilian intellectual in this period has been the subject of much enquiry⁷¹, and it is important not to hold up these leftist intellectuals to a standard they did not themselves seek to meet. Those Chauí refers to were not all – Castro was not – avowing their loyalty to the masses on the basis of revolutionary solidarity. On the contrary, they were producing ‘political, economic, and governmental plans for the state,’ and ‘possess[ed] a vision of the demiurgic role of the state to solve class struggle’⁷². Many different strands of thought competed, both on the right and the left⁷³, but in the 1950s and early 1960s the question of the nation, and of national economic development, drew intellectuals like moths to the institutional flames of the Economic Commission for Latin America (CEPAL) and the Instituto Superior de Estudos Brasileiros (ISEB). Both housed distinct and shifting approaches. Characterising them as respectively structuralist and national developmentalist is schematically useful, though reductive. ISEB included important Brazilian intellectuals such as the sociologist Alberto Guerreiro Ramos and the political theorist Hélio Jaguaribe. The dependency theorists of the last chapter gathered at CEPAL. Holding them together was a shared concern with how to describe, define, practice and theorise national development, but their approaches to the problem were radically different, and changed quite dramatically⁷⁴. Jaguaribe, for instance, moved from a revolutionary socialist position in 1953 to endorsing a capitalist developmentalism led by the national industrial bourgeoisie by 1958⁷⁵. This was one of many dividing lines among left intellectuals which saw ‘antagonisms [...] between localism and cosmopolitanism, nationalism and internationalism’⁷⁶. Castro was part of a broad field of debate about modes of development, consistently flying the flag for agrarian reform, and the priority of addressing social deprivation in the Northeast. He argued in 1962 in the *Revista Brasileira de Ciências Sociais* [Brazilian Journal of the Social Sciences] that the Brazilian left was ‘politically conservative and economically revolutionary’⁷⁷. Conservative in defending representative democracy and structure of congress and executive, and in its obsession with anti-communism. Economically revolutionary because of the tenets of underdevelopment theory and because true agrarian reform would really be revolution⁷⁸.

Castro’s concept of revolution is important. His position here recalls Enrique Dussel’s analysis, outlined in Chapter One. Specifically, though, in the early 1950s Castro defined revolution through José Ortega y Gasset’s concept of ‘historical crisis,’ as ‘a process of transformation of the whole, a historical

⁷¹ eg Chilcote, *Intellectuals*; Ioris, *Transforming Brazil*.

⁷² Chauí, *Between Conformity and Resistance*, 36.

⁷³ Chilcote, *Intellectuals*.

⁷⁴ Bielschowsky, *Pensamento Econômico Brasileiro*.

⁷⁵ Toledo, ‘ISEB Intellectuals, the Left, and Marxism’, 111–13.

⁷⁶ Chilcote, *Intellectuals*, 108 quoting Marilena Chauí.

⁷⁷ Castro, ‘A revolução social brasileira’, 209.

⁷⁸ Horowitz, Castro, and Gerassi, *Latin American Radicalism*, 245; See also Forman, ‘Disunity and Discontent’, 10.

transmutation which replaces one world of social beliefs by another in which the former social values no longer have meaning'⁷⁹. By 1966, on the other hand, lecturing in Peru, Castro drew on Hegel's idea that revolution was the passage from the quantitative to the qualitative. He described Hegel's thought as obscure – like the clouds that wrap the city of Lima for months at a time – but seeks to apply the idea of the historical accumulation of quantity, leading to a social explosion through transmutation to the atomic world. For Castro, the post-war period was increasingly defined by this atomic transformation⁸⁰. Importantly, in the 1950s Castro shared a common trope with many other left-wing intellectuals, that the Brazilian people were awakening, and accruing their own destiny. Paulo Freire argued later that 'culture, the arts, literature, and science showed new tendencies towards research, identification with Brazilian reality, and the planning of solutions rather than their importation. (The Superintendency of Development of the Northeast [SUDENE], directed by the economist Celso Furtado before the military *coup*, was an example of such planning.) The country had begun to find itself. The people emerged and began to participate in the historical process'⁸¹. In part, this is a classical trope of nationalism. As Terry Eagleton wrote in 1988, 'the metaphysics of nationalism speak of the entry into full self-realization of a unitary subject known as the people. As with all such philosophies of the subject from Hegel to the present, this monadic subject must somehow curiously preexist its own process of materialization'⁸². Eagleton's analysis exposes some of the pathologies inherent in intellectuals' appeals to the *povo*, but it is important to put this into historical and geographical context. For Fanon, 'the anticolonial struggle for national independence was inseparable from a distinctly transnational struggle for liberation from imperialism on a global scale'⁸³. Or as Neil Lazarus puts it, the distinction between 'bourgeois nationalism [and] liberationist, anti-imperialist, nationalist internationalism'⁸⁴. However, these commitments must be geographically nuanced: Fanon also observes deep regional distinctions which articulate the emergence of national consciousness⁸⁵, and of course Castro and others' practice in Brazil was more precisely about anti-imperialism than anti-colonialism. Emancipatory consciousness – both the rhetorical insistence on it and actually existing popular movements – took place unevenly across national territory, and, as Gramsci emphasizes, in particular spatial formations.

Many – not least the United States government – saw the Northeast as a new Cuba. As the last chapter outlined, this was somewhat tendentious. I want to pick this thread up again to argue that the Cuban experience was key in establishing new models for Northeastern radicalism for intellectuals. This was

⁷⁹ Castro, *Geography of Hunger*, 18.

⁸⁰ Castro, *Adónde va?*, 26–27.

⁸¹ Freire, *Education for Critical Consciousness*, 26.

⁸² Eagleton, 'Nationalism, Irony and Commitment', 28.

⁸³ Casarino, 'The Southern Answer', 683.

⁸⁴ Lazarus, 'National Consciousness and the Specificity of (Post)Colonial Intellectualism', 197.

⁸⁵ Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*.

connected to the internationalist nationalism encapsulated by the Tricontinental conference. The idea of the Northeast as a new Cuba suggests a new conception and scale of the region which was not the tribalist regionalism that Fanon excoriates: ‘African unity, that vague formula [...] takes off the mask, and crumbles into regionalism inside the hollow shell of nationality itself’⁸⁶. Radical Northeastern regionalism was tied to national developmentalism, anti-imperialism and internationalism. This is to follow Featherstone’s argument that ‘subaltern articulations of cosmopolitanism can become constitutive of internationalism allowing a more generous account of who matters in shaping internationalist politics and broadens agency beyond national left leaderships’⁸⁷. Brazilian nationalism and Northeastern regionalism are emancipatory positions when considered in these particular historical and geographical terms. Indeed, as the previous chapter argued, the regional identity of the Northeast and regional thinking on underdevelopment were connected with a global movement for economic emancipation which Castro was part of. It was a Third Worldist commitment to the nation articulated through the Northeast. These tensions marked both the geographies of Castro’s intellectualism, and the geography that his intellectual work put forward. Represented by the countervailing pulls of Recife, Rio and Brasília this period was marked by competing, fraying loyalties to national and regional parties, and twin external desires: to engage in internationalist projects, and to pursue an intellectual life of writing and academic practice. How Castro’s intellectual and political practice functioned at the scale of the international is the question I now raise.

B. The National-International Intellectual: 1960-1964: Subaltern Geopolitics and Globalisms

After not appointing Castro as Minister of Agriculture, Goulart decided to make him Ambassador to the United Nations. This allowed Castro to build on the networks he had established at the FAO and to continue to make a name for himself in international circles, but withdrew him from the turf wars of regional politics at an important juncture in the Northeast’s modern history between 1960 and 1964. The UN post gave him the opportunity to enact deeply held positions on internationalism. His hopes – as they had been at the FAO – were in various ways to be dashed, and his navigation of affiliation and independence tested. We can understand Castro’s work in this period through what Ruth Craggs has called, developing Joanne Sharp’s work, ‘subaltern geopolitics’. Craggs uses subaltern to mean ‘neither in charge, nor excluded entirely’, and gives a thick sense of the ‘mundane, messy and sometimes contradictory’ practices that subaltern geopolitics can consist of⁸⁸. My approach to Castro’s work in the

⁸⁶ Fanon.

⁸⁷ Featherstone, “‘Gramsci in Action’: Space, Politics, and the Making of Solidarities’, 75.

⁸⁸ Craggs, ‘Subaltern Geopolitics and the Post-Colonial Commonwealth, 1965–1990’, 47.

FAO, the UN and multiple spaces of informal or liminal geopolitics⁸⁹ responds to Craggs' call for postcolonial geographers to 'look more carefully at the mid-twentieth century era during which people, institutions and states negotiated, performed and experienced becoming postcolonial'⁹⁰. In Castro's case, we are dealing here with a philosophy of praxis: as well as practising subaltern geopolitics, he theorized it. In *Geopolítica da Fome* Castro declared that he wanted to reclaim geopolitics from its Nazi heritage. He sought to 'demonstrate that political drivers make no sense outside geographical parameters, that is, disassociated from reality and from the contingencies of the natural and cultural environment'⁹¹. As I have discussed in Chapter Three, Castro's work constitutes an important strand of critical geopolitics, later developed by other critical geographers in the Northeast of Brazil, including Milton Santos and Manuel Correia De Andrade⁹². Articulated in the early 1950s, it emerged before the growth of the school of geopolitics in France and elsewhere.

Castro's geopolitical theory and praxis went beyond the formulations in *Geopolítica da Fome*. He saw his role as both inside and outside institutions. For instance, in notes for a presentation on the geopolitical significance of Brasília, seemingly to be given at the influential ISEB in 1960⁹³, Castro wrote that geopolitics involved the 'relations between the environment or the geographical context and the political process,' and the relations 'between the State and the ecological framework in which it sits. Geographical phase in time. It is geography in movement'⁹⁴. These gnomic fragments show how Castro's thought continued to develop. A sophisticated approach to the relations between historical time, space and the state appears to be emerging. The idea of 'geographical phase in time' gestures towards the periodization of history through geography that Milton Santos would later develop⁹⁵. We see these hints developed in the later chapters of *Death in the Northeast*, and in the work which emerges from his time at Vincennes. I will return to these (and the methodological question of reading such fragments) in the next chapter.

When writing *Geopolítica da Fome* Castro already had experience of international institutions, and the sharp practices of geopolitics. His initial election to the FAO had been greeted in the Brazilian press as a national victory. Castro worked to bolster this narrative and in 1954 the Brazilian government lobbied internationally for Castro's re-election⁹⁶. It was as a public intellectual that he traversed academic,

⁸⁹ McConnell, 'Liminal Geopolitics'.

⁹⁰ Craggs, 'Postcolonial Geographies'.

⁹¹ Castro, *Geopolítica da Fome: Ensaio sobre os Problemas de Alimentação e de População do Mundo*, 1:27.

⁹² Ferretti and Viotto Pedrosa, 'Inventing Critical Development'.

⁹³ Neves, 'Josué de Castro: Cronologia'.

⁹⁴ Castro, 'Significação Geopolítica de Brasília'.

⁹⁵ Melgaço and Prouse, 'Milton Santos and the Centrality of the Periphery'.

⁹⁶ João Cleophas, 'Do Ministro Da Agricultura Ao Ministro Das Relações Exteriores: Assunto: Posição Do Brasil Em Relação a F.A.O.'

pedagogical, governmental, popular and radical spaces. He used the same arguments and analysis in his theoretical writing as in his political praxis⁹⁷. For instance, opening a session as the Brazilian Chair of the ‘Committee of Eighteen Powers’ under the auspices of the UN conferences on disarmament in February 1964, Castro began by reflecting on Einstein. He admits to his audience of Geneva diplomats that ‘this manner of approaching the subject – that is to say, getting to practical realities by the paths of theory – might seem strange to members of the Committee,’ but it is because of the theoretical work of Einstein that they are there at all: ‘there is no essential difference between practice and theory, since the theory of today transforms into the practice of tomorrow’⁹⁸. His distinctive approach to geopolitics constituted a concerted effort to engage in meaningful political conversations in geopolitical spaces, and to leverage (what he saw as) his intellectual, and consequently moral, prestige.

Moving in and out of state circles, Castro took on a particular form of subjectivity. As ambassador his formulations are those of traditional geopolitics – ‘Brazil thinks’ ‘Brazil desires’ – but bear the marks of his own political and intellectual project, for example when he claimed that ‘the politics of my country are based on a trilogy: that of the three ‘ds’: development, decolonization and disarmament’⁹⁹. His claims to representation oscillated but his formal geopolitical interventions were dissonant also because the geopolitical position of Brazil (particularly up to 1964), was itself dissonant. Formulating the ‘geopolitics of knowledge’, Walter Mignolo points out that ‘dependency theory [ran] parallel to decolonization in Africa and Asia and suggested a course of action for Latin American countries some 150 years after their decolonization’¹⁰⁰. This theory and course of action was one Castro helped formulate intellectually, and was involved in through geopolitical practice.

Castro lived out Mignolo’s account of the geopolitics of knowledge in his own biography. For Mignolo ‘dependency theory was a response from the exteriority of the system—not the exterior but the exteriority’: ‘the outside [that] is named from the inside in the exercise of the colonality of power’¹⁰¹. This captures Castro’s epistemological, biographical and geopolitical positioning. His practiced critique of geopolitics came from the geopolitical system’s exteriority. Castro’s geopolitics was not, nor had ever been, exterior to the entanglements of power and knowledge it appraised and intervened in. His intellectual work was profoundly connected to European enlightenment thought and Euro-American modernity, but was not reducible to it, marked by what Mignolo calls ‘the colonial difference’: the connector that ‘brings to the foreground the planetary dimension of human history silenced by

⁹⁷ See for example Castro, ‘Discurso 1962’.

⁹⁸ Castro, ‘Conférence des dix-huit’, 1–2.

⁹⁹ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, ‘Proceedings of Conference of the FAO. 12th Session. Commission III.’, 9.

¹⁰⁰ Mignolo, ‘The Geopolitics of Knowledge and the Colonial Difference’, 62.

¹⁰¹ Mignolo, 62.

discourses centring on modernity, postmodernity, and Western civilization'¹⁰². Castro's geopolitical critique emerged within 'Western civilization' both geographically and philosophically. He was formed intellectually under the conditions Enrique Dussel lays out of Latin American intellectuals' 'transmodernity.' He wrote that when he was a child he 'had no idea of the existence of a country called Venezuela, but knew of France, England, Portugal, Spain, of which we spoke every day at school'¹⁰³. Like Dussel, under the influence of European thinkers such as Oswald Spengler, José Ortega y Gasset and Arnold Toynbee, he was also part of the generation of Latin American critical scholars who negotiated this inheritance in new ways. Dussel discussed taking part with Castro in a 'Latin American Week' in Paris in December 1964, during which Latin American intellectuals proposed formulations for the cultural and intellectual identity of Latin America. Movement and geography are again key to this narrative: 'we discovered ourselves to be "Latin Americans," or at least no longer "Europeans," from the moment that we disembarked in Lisbon or Barcelona'¹⁰⁴.

The framework of 'transmodernity' therefore offers a way to understand Castro's own biography. Castro's trajectory, however, shows that the parallelism of dependency theory and decolonization which Mignolo posits was riven by internal hierarchies, jostlings for position and forms of power. Castro was among those who argued that Brazil should configure itself as a 'leader' of the Third World. In 1963 he wrote a piece for the anti-colonial journal *Présence Africaine*, itself a site of great debate over the role of intellectuals and *hommes de cultures* in the political revolutions of de-colonization. This was not his only association with the journal: in 1960 he had been a 'leading participant'¹⁰⁵ in a meeting in Rome of the *Société Européenne de Culture* [European Society of Culture] organized in part by *Présence Africaine*. This places him in a significant 'epistemic community'¹⁰⁶ of this conference alongside key thinkers of decolonization and independence such as Franz Fanon, Aimé Césaire and Léopold Senghor. He constituted a Brazilian (and geographical) link with African intellectual and political projects in this critical moment of decolonization. However, these were not smooth relationships. The Rome conference had been marked by divisions and Castro's piece for *Présence Africaine* itself seems clumsily formulated, arguing that Brazil could be the 'parent' of the Afro-Asiatic world¹⁰⁷. Castro suggests Brazil's place in the world is tied to its intellectual life: 'today, we are a politically mature nation, with our own thought, with well defined aspirations, crystallized above all in the central tenet of economic development and the desire for wholesale political and economic emancipation, free of all

¹⁰² Mignolo, 61.

¹⁰³ Castro, 'A La Recherche de l'Amérique Latine', 67.

¹⁰⁴ Dussel, 'Transmodernity and Interculturality', 28.

¹⁰⁵ Jachec, Europe's Intellectuals.

¹⁰⁶ Craggs and Mahony, 'The Geographies of the Conference'.

¹⁰⁷ Castro, 'Le Brésil'.

foreign interference'¹⁰⁸. Castro asserts an emancipatory nationalism and positions himself, and Brazil, firmly in the non-aligned movement, arguing, as he had elsewhere, that the 1955 Bandung conference was the most significant geopolitical event of recent decades¹⁰⁹. Castro was an important part of bringing the discourse of 'Third Worldism' into Brazil and Latin America in the 1960s¹¹⁰. He spoke in the Brazilian parliament in favour of an anti-colonial foreign policy for Brazil, sharply criticizing the Brazilian government's failure to support Algerian independence, calling it 'a position in support of slavery, colonialism and imperialism'¹¹¹. Here it is worth dwelling on translation again. Castro's words were: '*orientação escravagista, colonialista e imperialista*'. The word '*escravagista*' means a position in favour of slavery – a slavist politics. Castro's tripartite description insists on the necessary interconnectedness of slavery, colonialism and imperialism, and emerges from the particular economic, social, and ecological forms of extractivism and oppression in the Brazilian Northeast.

Castro's anti-colonialism was particularly dogged in support of the Cuban revolution. He was the president of the Brazilian Cuban Solidarity Commission in the early 1960s, and travelled there in the late 1950s¹¹². On April 17th 1961 Cuban Exiles supported by the US government invaded Cuba at The Bay of Pigs. At 9am on April 18th Josué de Castro received a telegram from the Cuban Government, through the *Instituto Cubano de Amistad Con Los Pueblos* [Cuban Institute for Friendship with Between Peoples]. Announcing that the attack had been repelled, the telegram urgently appealed to Cuba's friends – Castro received it in his role as a principle defender of Cuba in Brazil – to help co-ordinate Latin American solidarity in the face of this imperialist attack. Castro immediately wrote in an official capacity to President Quadros¹¹³, co-ordinated a Parliamentary appeal to the US government to desist¹¹⁴, and went, alongside the communist leader Luis Carlos Prestes, to the US Embassy in Brazil to denounce the US's action¹¹⁵. He drew a broad anti-colonial conclusion from the historical moment. For Castro, the Cuban revolution was the most important event in twentieth century Latin American history, tied to American imperialism and economic dependency, in particular through the plantation system¹¹⁶. Unsurprisingly, he attributed some importance to the prevalence of hunger in Cuba prior to the

¹⁰⁸ Castro, 187.

¹⁰⁹ Castro, 'De Bandung a Nova Dehli'.

¹¹⁰ Albuquerque, 'Tercer Mundo y Tercermundismo En Brasil'.

¹¹¹ 'essa orientação escravagista, colonialista e imperialista'. *Diário de Congresso Nacional*, 1960, Quinta-feira 17th November.

¹¹² Castro, 'Notes for interview with Jornal do Comercio'; See also Castro, 'To Students Union of Pernambuco'.

¹¹³ Castro, 'To Jânio Quadros: Cuba'.

¹¹⁴ Castro and Frente Parlamentar Nacionalista, 'Apelo'; Various, 'Newspaper Clippings 1961: Cuba'.

¹¹⁵ Various, 'Newspaper Clippings 1961: Cuba'.

¹¹⁶ Castro, 'Significação Política Da Revolução Cubana'.

revolution, which he called a ‘War Against Hunger’¹¹⁷. It prefaced the next stage in anti-colonial emancipation: ‘it is human and just that a people revolt against a colonial state of things and, through herculean effort, emancipate themselves and organize a government that cleanses the nation of the opprobrium of colonial oppression’¹¹⁸. It is significant, here, in terms of Castro’s own Latin American anti-colonialism, that he here elides formal colonialism and imperialism, characterising the struggle against both as against colonial oppression.

In geopolitical terms, decolonization altered the frameworks of possibility. At meetings of the UN a new discourse of the international was possible. Castro’s archive shows his own role in this new kind of geopolitical discourse. The *Présence Africaine* piece was published at the very end of 1963. In November of that year Castro had taken part in the FAO annual conference in Rome as chair of the Brazilian delegation. A transcript of the meeting survives. A controversy arose when the Ghanaian delegation, supported by all the African delegations, sought to alter FAO rules to enable the expulsion of member states if they violated fundamental principles. Their target was apartheid South Africa. European countries and the United States opposed the motion on the basis that the FAO was a specialized agency which should address ‘technical’ issues, and this was a ‘political’ intervention. Castro emerged as a central figure in the dispute. He used his intervention to make a theoretical point: he had long disputed the separation between ‘technical’ and ‘political’ questions. This was why he always refused to refer to hunger as ‘under-nutrition’. Speaking in French, Castro said, ‘*le technique* is nothing other than the instrument which is applied to resolve economic and social problems in the the world, thus: political problems’¹¹⁹. We need to pause here on how to translate ‘*technique*’¹²⁰. Normally ‘*technique*’, like the Portuguese ‘*técnica*,’ would be translated as ‘technology,’ but neither this – nor the English word ‘technique,’ which has accrued a different emphasis – capture Castro’s meaning. The English ‘technics’ is much closer to ‘*technique*’ in French and ‘*técnica*’ in Portuguese. Both refer to a mediating concept: the mode of doing which sits between theory and practice; the Greek ‘*têchne*’ that bridges episteme and praxis. This was to become an important point in Milton Santos’ geographical theory¹²¹. In his use of *technique* Castro is resisting the reification of the pragmatic which resides in the English terms ‘technology’, and in the Anglo-Saxon politics of abstracting ‘technical’ from ‘political’ questions. This is precisely the politics of knowledge and practice that Timothy Mitchell and others would later go on to theorise in the history of development¹²². This detour into technics is important because it demonstrates Castro’s attempt to overcome the distinction between theory and praxis. He did

¹¹⁷ Anonymous, ‘Josué de Castro: “Revolução em Cuba é Guerra Contra a Fome”’.

¹¹⁸ *Diário de Congresso Nacional*, 1960, Terça-feira 6th December

¹¹⁹ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, ‘Proceedings of Conference of the FAO. 12th Session. Commission III.’, 5.

¹²⁰ See Davies, ‘Milton Santos’.

¹²¹ Davies.

¹²² Mitchell, *Rule of Experts*; Ferguson, *Anti-Politics Machine*.

so in part by insisting on the political qualities of the spaces of geopolitical practice. Castro saw intellectual work as taking place within and through institutions, not against them.

In the conference room in Rome Castro declared, sylphishly, that he had waited two days to speak, hoping that the experienced hands of international diplomacy, the ‘well-developed nations’, would come up with a solution to the impasse. But he had waited in vain. He was unwilling, he said, to expel members, believing that international bodies should be spaces of dialogue and challenge. Nevertheless the actions of the apartheid government constituted a betrayal of human conscience. He was interrupted by the chairman, and told not to attack individual countries. He responded that he was not, he was defending principles¹²³. He declared Brazil to be in favour of the Ghanaian proposal and was interrupted by applause. Having set out this stall of non-aligned solidarity, Castro suggested that a sub-committee be established to find a negotiated solution. Castro’s suggestion was unanimously accepted, and a tragicomic bickering ensued on the make-up of the sub-committee, (the Algerians tried to nominate the Yugoslavians to the European group, which somewhat irritated the English and French), where it should meet (there wasn’t a room with simultaneous translation available), and how it should report. Attending to the micro-geographies of this meeting reveal the disruption to ‘normal’ practice stirred up by the new geopolitical reality of decolonization¹²⁴. It shows Castro’s approach to international politics; his speech is peppered with references to his long-standing in international institutions¹²⁵ and to his friendships across the organization¹²⁶. It is based on defending universal principles while attempting to reconcile this with a continuing belief in the potential of international institutions. He would almost totally rescind that belief later, outlining a strident critique of the FAO in particular in *The Black Book of Hunger*, first published in 1966¹²⁷.

Writing as ambassador to the UN, in his *Présence Africaine* article Castro lays out a new direction for Brazilian foreign policy. Recognizing previous failures, Brazil will now enact its ‘anti-imperialist vocation’, be a friend to proletariat and formerly colonized people around the world and ‘throw a bridge of comprehension, mutual aid and political solidarity across the Atlantic, driving peace and neutrality’¹²⁸. Brazil is part of the world of people of colour, linked to underdeveloped countries in the ‘four corners of the world’¹²⁹. This emphasis on an Atlantic vocation, Africa, southern solidarity and multilateralism

¹²³ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, ‘Proceedings of Conference of the FAO. 12th Session. Commission III.’, 8.

¹²⁴ Craggs and Mahony, ‘The Geographies of the Conference’.

¹²⁵ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, ‘Proceedings of Conference of the FAO. 12th Session. Commission III.’

¹²⁶ See also remarks about Castro made by various delegates at Final Session as Chairman of the Executive Council of the FAO: Council of FAO, ‘Council of FAO: Twenty-Second Session: Fourth Plenary Meeting: Verbatim Record’, 29–32.

¹²⁷ Castro, *The Black Book of Hunger*.

¹²⁸ Castro, ‘Le Brésil’, 190.

¹²⁹ Castro, 189.

were to re-emerge as the key discursive tenets of Brazilian foreign policy under the Lula governments of the early twenty-first century¹³⁰. Indeed, in 1960 Castro had served as the head of a delegation to Africa with the objective of laying the groundwork for enhanced relations between Brazil and newly independent countries¹³¹.

In 1964, as well as serving a geopolitical function, publishing in the hugely influential *Présence Africaine* was part of Castro's intellectual self-formation. The edition in which he published included poetry by the Haitian revolutionary René Depestre, the American Marxist humanist Raya Denayavskaya on African socialism, and a report on the struggle for independence in Mozambique by Edouardo Mondlane. This is not to claim a unity of purpose among these pieces – *Présence Africaine* itself, though committed to radical humanism and liberation, was in Alexandra Reza's terms, an 'unstable compound'¹³² – but this company reveals Castro's self-fashioning as a radical, anti-colonial intellectual. He was not the only Brazilian geographer in these circles: Milton Santos, having travelled with Quadros to Cuba, also engaged with anti-colonial movements in the early 1960s¹³³. However, in Castro's piece a familiar theme pops up. In the small print, his biography reads: 'Josué de Castro: Brazilian Economist. Specialist in the problems of hunger in the world. Author of Geopolitics of Hunger. Permanent Representative of his country to the UN. Geneva'¹³⁴. Nowhere does it say 'geographer.' Being a public intellectual had always come before being a geographer. As argued above, he mobilized geography as a means, not an end. Nevertheless, placing Castro in Rome at the FAO, and in the pages of *Présence Africaine* at the end of 1963, sees the history of geography not only, as we familiarly have it, by the side and in the hands of imperialists and colonialists, but alongside and in solidarity with movements for liberation. Castro, in late 1963 and early 1964 was in militant company, circulating in international spaces, and politically enabled by the increasingly radical scope of Brazil's regional, national and international politics. It turned out, however, that this would shortly come to an abrupt end.

C. The Exiled Intellectual, 1964-1968: Peace and Internationalism

The events of spring 1964 fundamentally changed the calculus of the anti-imperialist Brazilian left and altered the personal political circumstances of its intellectuals and activists. Any consideration of the impacts of the coup on intellectuals should not forget their relative privilege: violence and immiseration

¹³⁰ Sader and Gentili, 'The Lula Government's Foreign Policy'; Saraiva, 'The New Africa and Brazil in the Lula Era'; Burges, 'Auto-Estima'.

¹³¹ Anonymous, 'O Brasil Quer Estreitar Relações com os Novos Países Africanos'.

¹³² Reza, 'African Literary Journals in French and Portuguese, 1947-1968: Politics, Culture and Form'.

¹³³ Pedrosa, 'The Long Journey of Milton Santos's Exile and the Formation of His Network of Cooperation'.

¹³⁴ Castro, 'Le Brésil', 192.

was enforced on many in Brazil not only immediately after the coup but for the decades of military rule. Castro and his intellectual colleagues' situation was to a great extent one of safety, security and good fortune in comparison with the majority of Brazilians. Castro's own name was one of the first on the military coup's lists for exile. Yet he was already in Geneva, which, Jean Ziegler argues, may have 'saved his life'¹³⁵, and allowed him to avoid the imprisonment that Miguel Arraes, Francisco Julião and others suffered at the hands of the military. Castro was aware of how his own circumstances of exile opened out onto the common experiences of all Brazilians. Speaking in May 1965 in Peru, as an honorary professor, he said, 'apparently they have stripped me of my so-called political rights. They have stripped me of nothing because no-one in my country has political rights in this moment. They have stripped me of nothing because everyone living there lives without political rights'¹³⁶.

Many scholars were forced into exile or imprisoned. Some went to Europe, like Castro. Others went to capitals of the non-aligned world: Miguel Arraes made a home in Algeria, Francisco Julião in Cuernavaca in Mexico. The key Peasant League activist Elizabeth Teixeira went into internal hiding. She lived as a school teacher in the *sertão* until she was located in 1984 by a film crew completing a documentary about the Peasant Leagues begun, and abandoned, in the spring of 1964¹³⁷. Vânia Bambirra initially went into hiding in São Paulo before escaping to Chile. As outlined in Chapter Four, the 1950s and early 1960s saw the early development of dependency theory in Brazil, but the coup made its development impossible, and the site of intellectual activity moved – initially to Santiago de Chile, and then to Mexico City¹³⁸. Emigrés, as they were for world literature¹³⁹ or area studies¹⁴⁰, were significant to the project of underdevelopment and dependency thought. One of the functions of intellectual networks at this time was precisely to protect those forced into exile. Alberto Guerreiro Ramos, for instance, secured a post at the University of Southern California through intellectual networks¹⁴¹, and so did Milton Santos and his brother Nailton¹⁴². Exile was the 'dividing of the waters' of Milton Santos' life, leading to new and distinct combinations of interlocutors, influences and institutions¹⁴³. Santos and Castro's lives in exile overlapped: Maria Adélia Aparecida de Souza, an influential Brazilian geographer who worked with Santos, describes having lunch with him and Castro

¹³⁵ Ziegler, *Betting on Famine*, 97.

¹³⁶ Castro, *Adónde va?*, 21.

¹³⁷ Coutinho, *Cabra Marcado*.

¹³⁸ Bambirra, *Teoria de La Dependencia: Una Anticritica*; Prado, 'Vânia Bambirra', 20–22.

¹³⁹ Apter, 'Global Translatio'.

¹⁴⁰ Sidaway, 'Geography, Globalization, and the Problematic of Area Studies', 995–96.

¹⁴¹ Brown, 'Guerreiro Ramos in the United States'.

¹⁴² Pedrosa, 'The Long Journey of Milton Santos's Exile and the Formation of His Network of Cooperation'; Bernardes, 'Milton Santos'.

¹⁴³ Pedrosa, 'The Long Journey of Milton Santos's Exile and the Formation of His Network of Cooperation', 444.

at UNESCO in Paris in 1971¹⁴⁴. In Santos' case, this network was part of an under-appreciated role in the formation of radical geography, which Pedrosa and Ferretti have begun to establish in recent research.

As the next chapter explores, Castro's exile led to new intellectual opportunities. Yet it also took its toll on him. We can trace its effects in both public and private spheres. When the coup took place, Castro had just finished writing a book about the Northeast. So too had Celso Furtado. Both were published in translation almost immediately: Castro's *Sete Palmos de Terra e Uma Caixaão* (1964) as *Death in the Northeast* (1965), and Furtado's *Dialética do Desenvolvimento* (1964) as *Diagnosis of the Brazilian Crisis* (1965). The translation of the titles tells its own story of travelling theory: Castro's translates as 'Seven Feet of Earth and a Coffin' and Furtado's as 'Dialectic of Development'. Castro's Brazilian title refers directly to the Peasant Leagues' demand for burial rights. In Furtado's it is explicit that the word 'dialectic' was a red flag for North American audiences, and the emphasis on crisis seemed more palatable. The translations attempted to create particular lexicons with which to tell the story of the Northeast to Anglo-Saxon audiences. As well as new titles, both were given new prefaces. These prefaces are dispatches from the heat of a profoundly disturbing and molten moment in Brazilian history. Furtado's book has two: the first, for the Brazilian edition, written in Recife, in January 1964, begins with a grandiose tone, leavened by deep political commitment: 'at no time has the responsibility of intellectuals been as great as it is now. And this responsibility has been betrayed by the commissions of some intellectuals and the omissions of others'¹⁴⁵.

Castro's *Death in the Northeast*, meanwhile, has one preface which is one page long, signed 'Geneva, May, 1964.':

'When a military junta brought down the administration of President João Goulart in the spring of 1964 and set up a new Brazilian government, this book was already being translated into English. My first impulse was to recall the manuscript and add a chapter on the downfall of Goulart and his land reform programs [...] to describe [...] still another setback to the progressive forces of Brazil at the hands of the reactionary minority [...] On reflection, however, I decided to let the book stand as it was, since the historical and sociological interpretation I had already provided adequately covered, and indeed anticipated, the incident'¹⁴⁶.

There is a certain poignancy and coolness here which belies the personal and political upheaval that 'Geneva, May 1964,' stands for in Castro's life. His exile was less than a month old. He was unable to

¹⁴⁴ Souza, 'As geografias da desigualdade', 430.

¹⁴⁵ Furtado, *Diagnosis*.

¹⁴⁶ Castro, *Death in the Northeast*.

return to Brazil, isolated from his wider family and friends and uncertain of where he would be able to live and work. His letters at the time illustrate the trauma this engendered in a man who suffered from extensive and profound periods of depression, which he referred to in French as *surmenage*, overstrain¹⁴⁷. Said suggests, cautiously, that there is a certain kind of pleasure in exile. Such pleasure was not in Castro's experience of the condition. Personally, the pain of exile was profound. He wrote to his children in mid-1964:

‘I received a telegram from an Arnaldo – I suppose it must be Arnaldo Niskier¹⁴⁸ – but whose text did little to clarify its subject. I enclose it here. In it, as you can see, I'm asked to urgently send photos. What photos? I don't know. Why urgent? I don't know’¹⁴⁹.

Many things rendered the early months of exile bewildering. The political situation remained opaque: he talks about the ‘confusing Brazilian reality,’ and his astonishment at the paradox of Franco-ist Spanish newspapers condemning the right-wing Brazilian ‘revolution.’ With the coup he lost his employment and position, and he had to reflect on what path to take: ‘of my activities the one that seems most promising, and with most of a future, is being a writer’¹⁵⁰. Paulo Cavalcanti – a fellow exile and former communist leader in Pernambuco – wrote ‘if you had asked me, before the coup of 1964, who, in my opinion would have the capacity to best bear political exile, I would have responded without hesitation: Josué de Castro.’ A polyglot, well-travelled and incredibly well connected, he would be fine. Cavalcanti admitted later that he had been wrong, and that Castro ‘died from the anguish of exile’¹⁵¹, struck down by episodes of depression.

In a letter to his children Castro notes that *Geografia da Fome* was eliciting attention from more publishers precisely because of his exile and Brazilian upheaval¹⁵². (Amusingly, the tangling up of titles means he needs to gloss this even to his own children as ‘(the study of Brazil)’¹⁵³.) Exile marked a shift in the form of Castro's intellectual work. The preface of *Death in the Northeast* is one of the earliest of his writings which registers his exile. It also raises questions about the book's authorship. Castro notes ‘in preparing this book, [he] enjoyed the invaluable collaboration of the Brazilian sociologist Alberto Passos Guimarães, who supplied background material for the chapters on the feudalistic Brazilian agrarian system’¹⁵⁴. Elsewhere he also noted that his wife, Glauce, was indispensable to continuing his

¹⁴⁷ See for instance Silva, ‘Josué por ele mesmo: o diário’, 35–38, 42–43.

¹⁴⁸ A Brazilian writer and friend of Castro's.

¹⁴⁹ Castro, “‘Meus queridos’”.

¹⁵⁰ Castro.

¹⁵¹ Cavalcanti, *A luta clandestina*.

¹⁵² Castro, “‘Meus queridos’”.

¹⁵³ Castro.

¹⁵⁴ Castro, *Death in the Northeast*.

work under the condition of exile, as he had acknowledged her to be to his early work, writing in 1946 that her name should be associated with *A Geografia da Fome*¹⁵⁵. Castro wrote to his children from Paris in June 1964 and told them he was struggling under the pressures of commitments and thanks to ‘the weight of age and accumulated fatigue.’ He asked them to consider Alberto Guimarães’ political standing and his position in relation to the coup and, if they approve, to approach Guimarães for agreement to reuse material published in a book called *Quatro séculos de Latifundio* [Four Centuries of the Latifundio] in return for a third or a quarter of the rights to the completed work¹⁵⁶. Guimarães was a Northeasterner, from Alagoas. A communist and self-taught intellectual, he was part of a group based in Maceió which included Castro’s friends Rachel de Queiroz and Graciliano Ramos. In the early 1960s he worked for the *Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística* (IBGE). Guimarães did more than provide background material. Chapters Three and Four of *Death in the Northeast* are written by him. Castro added some sections – on the foundation of Recife and Olinda, for example¹⁵⁷, but the large majority is effectively identical to the opening chapters of Guimarães’ *Quatro Séculos*¹⁵⁸. Presumably – although I haven’t found further letters pertaining to it – Castro’s children came to an agreement with Guimarães. The texts diverge when Castro begins to draw on Gunnar Myrdal on the economics of underdevelopment. But the sections written by Guimarães provide the historical analysis for Castro’s argument that the *latifundio* is a hybrid, feudal-capitalist formation. This informs Castro’s theory of underdevelopment, and his understanding of the political dynamics of the Northeast in the mid-twentieth century. The timings of the preface and the letter raise some questions. Either Castro had already ‘written’ these sections on the history of the *latifundia*, prior to getting Guimarães’ consent, or the preface is dated May but is actually written later. It is no coincidence that *Death in the Northeast*, his most explicitly regional work, not only coincided with Castro identifying himself as principally a writer, but bears the marks of exile in its very language.

In exile Castro stayed in close contact with political and cultural developments in Brazil. In March 1969 he wrote to his friend André Chamson at the Archives Nationales in Paris enclosing a record from the Northeast, noting how the songs are engaged in the dramatic political struggle in the country. (Which record, sadly, he does not say¹⁵⁹.) But he also travelled compulsively, to Russia, China, the Middle East, the Caribbean, the United States and Latin America. There was a self-imposed limit to his mobility – he noted in a letter in 1964 that he had been invited on an all expenses paid trip to Australia. He wasn’t planning to go, because, ever the geographer, he ‘had a quick look at a map and Australia really is at

¹⁵⁵ Castro, *Geografia Da Fome: O Dilema Brasileiro*: Pão Ou Aço 1965, 1:32.

¹⁵⁶ Castro, “‘Meus queridos’”.

¹⁵⁷ Castro, *Death in the Northeast*, 74–75.

¹⁵⁸ Passos Guimarães, *Quatro Séculos de Latifúndio* [Four Centuries of the Latifundio], 9–70.

¹⁵⁹ Castro, ‘To André Chamson’.

the end of the world'¹⁶⁰. Indeed, such travelling often cost him in terms of his health, and consequent ability to work. There are many references to breaks in his schedule thanks to fatigue and usually unspecified ill health, likely associated with depression¹⁶¹.

Another consequence of exile was Castro's subsequent muted reception in Brazilian geography. His books were banned in Pernambuco¹⁶², and he fell out of university courses and public education¹⁶³. He lost both of what Ward calls the 'bounded' and 'relational' publics for his work: those within his discipline, and beyond it¹⁶⁴. Exile skewed the academic impact of his work beyond his death¹⁶⁵. As Milton Santos put it, he 'died at the wrong time,' and in the wrong place¹⁶⁶. Nevertheless, as for Santos, exile opened up extraordinary opportunities for Castro, which were to take his work, and politics, in new directions. He became an active participant in many international networks, from the Brazilian and Latin American exile community, to the World Government network and others. I want to draw attention, here, to his place in a global network of anti-colonialists. Clodomir Morais claimed that Castro's flat in Paris was used as a late night safe-house by African National Congress militants en route between secret missions¹⁶⁷. He suggested that Castro had personal friendships with quite an extraordinary list of famous men: 'Sukarno, Nyerere, Nehru, Nasser, Sekou Touré, Chu En-lai, N'Krumah. [...] BenBella, Lumumba, Mandela etc. [...] general Cárdenas, of México; Perón, of Argentina; the Generals Torrijos, of Panamá; Alvarado, of Peru, and his friends Fidel and Allende, respectively, of Cuba and of Chile'¹⁶⁸. We would do well to take this list with some caution. Not because Castro did not know many of them: in his archive there are epistolary exchanges with Nehru, Léopold Senghor, Juan Peron and Salvador Allende, and he certainly met Fidel Castro. These lists and letters are important for putting the history of geography into unfamiliar company. But they don't demonstrate the extent of his involvement in clandestine struggle, or the influence of him, or geographical thought, on anti-colonial or anti-imperialist movements.

When the ex- (and future-) President of Argentina, Juan Perón, was in exile in Madrid in December 1968 he wrote to Castro: 'here we work in the most absolute secrecy, for now, because one way of not exposing ourselves to the actions of our enemies (and we have powerful enemies) is to work in the

¹⁶⁰ Castro, "'Meus queridos'".

¹⁶¹ eg Castro, 'Letter to Raja Gabaglia'; Castro, 'Letter to Gilbert McAllister'.

¹⁶² Comissão Estadual da Memória e Verdade Dom Helder Câmara, 'Movimento Estudantil'.

¹⁶³ Santos, 'Entrevista explosiva'.

¹⁶⁴ Ward, "'Public Intellectuals'", *Geography, Its Representations and Its Publics*, 1041–42.

¹⁶⁵ Campos, 'A Presença Na Geografia de Josué de Castro'.

¹⁶⁶ Mamigonian et al., 'Entrevista Com o Professor Milton Santos'.

¹⁶⁷ Clodomir, 'Josué de Castro: Brasileiro e Cidadão Do Mundo [Josué de Castro: Brazilian and Citizen of the World]'.

¹⁶⁸ Clodomir.

greatest clandestinity, at least until we have organization and means enough to resist in the struggle'¹⁶⁹. Perón wrote that Castro and he will meet, either in Paris or in Madrid in the coming months, to see one another's organizations. Castro's organization which Perón is referring to is not a secret (in his case, ultimately successful), project to return to power, but the rather more run-of-the-mill Centre for International Development. Further research in other archives could contribute to a deeper understanding of these networks. The evidence available here precipitates interesting questions about what Castro contributed – intellectually and practically – to various kinds of political struggles, and what these relationships mean for the history of geography.

In 1969 Castro co-edited a collection of essays called *Latin American Radicalism*. The book ties Castro to a later generation of critical Latin American thought including Rodolfo Stavenhagen and Régis Debray. It also situates him within anglophone social science and Latin American studies. On the other hand the book is marked by the ambivalence of its political positioning. As a contemporary review by Robert F Smith in *The Nation* noted, 'it is apparent that [the editors] agreed to disagree as to the nature of radicalism [...] Are nationalist movements invariably radical? Is there a line, however dim, which separates a radical from a liberal?'¹⁷⁰ These questions were of crucial importance as revolutionary movements bubbled across Latin America, and the vagueness of the collection can apply to Castro's own writings. The apparent apotheosis of Castro's own late radicalism can be seen in Eduardo Galeano's *Open Veins of Latin America*, who wrote in 1973: 'says Josué de Castro: "I who have received an international peace prize, think that, unhappily, there is no other solution than violence for Latin America"'¹⁷¹. Galeano does not give a reference for this statement, but it is clear, from reading Castro's scattered writings on the question, that by the late 1960s he had moved into this more radical position. The source of Galeano's quotation seems to be an interview with the Spanish magazine, *Cuadernos para el Diálogo*, in 1968, in which Castro said 'the ideal solution for the world would be peaceful. During periods of violence a great deal of lucidity and and consciousness of circumstances is lost. However, I believe that for Latin America there is now no other possibility than violent revolution. I am a desperate pacifist.' Castro refuted the possibility of gradualism and reform, saying 'all efforts at reform have failed'¹⁷².

It is worth pausing on how Castro thought became more radical as he grew older. By the late 1960s he is explicit that truly satiating the hunger of the oppressed would require a massive rupture of the existing order. A comparison with Gilberto Freyre shows Castro's radical ageing (a recovery of his radical youth). In 1950, in his first ever run for election, Castro put his name forward under the banner of the

¹⁶⁹ Perón, 'Juan Perón to Josué de Castro', 10 December 1968; See also Perón, 'Juan Perón to Josué de Castro', 25 May 1972.

¹⁷⁰ Smith, 'Latin American Radicalism (Review)'.

¹⁷¹ Galeano, *Open Veins of Latin America*, 4.

¹⁷² Rosembuj, 'Josué de Castro: las dudas de un pacifista [Josué de Castro, the doubts of a pacifist]'.

same coalition as Gilberto Freyre¹⁷³. By 1968 Freyre was championing the Portuguese Salazar regime's lusotropical fascism, and Castro was admiring the May '68 graffiti on his Parisian classroom walls¹⁷⁴ and declaring that hopes for peaceful reform in Latin America were over¹⁷⁵. As his own biography led him to new places, his intellectual work increasingly placed Latin American struggle deeper in tricontinental, revolutionary contexts. This movement was tied not only to the changing political situation in Latin America, and his own exile in 1964, but also to Castro's pedagogical and research experiences in the radical spaces of the Parisian universities during the 1968 uprisings. It is to these that I turn in the next chapter.

Conclusion

Thinking about the question of the public geographical intellectual through Castro's work and life might suggest that public prominence is a pre-condition of intellectual praxis. This is not what I want to argue: Castro is an exception, not the rule. Edward Said emphasizes that the role of the intellectual is not contingent on the scale of audience. Converging on Gramsci's conception, Said argues that intellectuals are not a select few but a larger group who conduct various kinds of interventions in many different settings. This opens up more space for considering contemporary geographers to be public intellectuals¹⁷⁶. It renders more immediate, and less high-flown, the questions of solidarity and critique which are the faultlines of intellectualism. Solidarity, as David Featherstone has drawn out, has everyday geographies, and relies on practices of exchange, communication, translation and generosity which constitute historically and geographically specific webs of solidarity¹⁷⁷. Nevertheless, there is necessarily a negotiation to be undertaken between solidarity and commitment. This chapter has shown that Castro navigated different kinds of intellectual commitment and responsibility.

These faultlines continue to mark the relationship between intellectual, movement, party, region, nation and universal causes today. In Brazil they are particularly keenly delineated, not least in this moment of neo-fascism. Brazil's *Partido Trabalhista* (PT) was the inheritor of the PTB. Many intellectuals have had close ties to the party. Its most recent Presidential candidate, Fernando Haddad, was a Professor of Political Science at the University of São Paulo. Marilena Chauí and Francisco de Oliveira were both involved in founding the PT in the 1980s. By 2005, however, they were in the midst of a negotiation over how to position themselves, and intellectual work, in relation to the first Lula government. Both

¹⁷³ Melo, 'Josué de Castro: Um Intelectual-Político'.

¹⁷⁴ Castro, 'Desarrollo, Ecología, Desarme y Descolonización'.

¹⁷⁵ Castro.

¹⁷⁶ Castree, 'Geography's New Public Intellectuals?'

¹⁷⁷ Featherstone, "'Gramsci in Action': Space, Politics, and the Making of Solidarities'; Featherstone, 'Maritime Labour'.

were to establish a profound critique of that government¹⁷⁸. They engaged in a public dialogue over what the role of the intellectual was. Chauí addressed Oliveira:

‘Look, Chico. They asked what I was going to say. I told them that there was something that I’d said to you, privately, that I was going to say in public. It is that you are the light of our eyes. Whenever some explanation about Brazil crystallizes – a historical, sociological or economic explanation – we can rely on your work to break it down, to give us another explanation, another understanding. Not any old understanding, a materialist understanding – but a serious one. There is also always the sense [...] that you always arrive at just the right time. Whenever there is the feeling that there is an explanation out there, but that it doesn’t really account for its object, a work of yours arrives which helps us understand our time [...] This is why you are the light of our eyes’¹⁷⁹.

Chauí describes not only the task of the intellectual but also the key role of friendship in intellectual life, which is a recurrent feature of Castro’s own biography. Chauí’s words offer a good starting point, too, for where to look for light, and new explanations, in these pitch-black times in Brazil’s contemporary history. Chauí picks up some of Said’s conceptions of the role of the intellectual: timing, publicness and a resolute contrariness of critique. She defines the ‘radicalism of critique’ as that which is immanent to the object which it studies (a definition similar to Labriola’s of the philosophy of praxis¹⁸⁰). It is precisely in terms of struggle that such work lives and breathes. Not in the sense of being aligned, or not, on particular forms of policy or political strategy, but in the sense that the struggle is contiguous with its own representation and interpretation. Speaking in 2009 about her work in the 1970s, Doreen Massey made a similar case: ‘we *were* the struggle. We didn’t have to go out and link up with the struggle. We were the struggle. [...] You know it is not like we find the nice people to help. We *were* the women’s movement or whatever’¹⁸¹. Affiliation and commitment is intimate and complete: the intellectual is not autonomous because they are separate or independent. On the contrary, intellectual autonomy, Chauí argues, can exist ‘only if it is supported by the stance of taking a position within class struggle against the dominant classes, and in the redefinition of universals, comprehended as concrete universals’¹⁸². Massey, Oliveira and Chauí sublate the criteria that Said proposes: ‘never solidarity before critique.’ Like Priyamvada Gopal, they ask, ‘why not both?’¹⁸³

This modality of commitment is challenging for academic practice. Yet, before getting carried away with the grandiosity of its claims it is crucial to reiterate Said’s insistence on the many scales of

¹⁷⁸ Oliveira, ‘Lula in the Labyrinth’; Oliveira, ‘The Lenin Moment’.

¹⁷⁹ Chauí, ‘Radicalidade’, 25.

¹⁸⁰ Haug, ‘Gramsci’s “Philosophy of Praxis”’, 3, 14.

¹⁸¹ Massey et al., ‘The Possibilities of a Politics of Place Beyond Place?’, 418.

¹⁸² Chauí, *Between Conformity and Resistance*, 25.

¹⁸³ Cambridge Critical Theory and Practice Seminars, *Gopal*.

intellectual work. Its audience is not pre-ordained as national, or global, or indeed regional. Intellectuals are a broad group conducting many kinds of work at many kinds of scales. Furthermore, it is by no means to claim that the intellectual is the *whole* of the struggle, but that intellectuals should seek to establish an immanent connection between intellectual work and political commitment. It suggests less that intellectual work should be the preface to, threshold of, or guilty pleasure after the real work of political action. It doesn't require the intellectual to stop writing and get on with real politics. As Paulo Freire wrote, 'the radical, [...] rejects activism and submits his actions to reflection'¹⁸⁴. Freire's concept of 'activism' here is not the same as that in common usage now: he means a kind of action-ism, which excessively prioritizes doing over theorized practice¹⁸⁵. The task of the radical intellectual necessitates profound reflections on Said's 'vocation for representation'. It requires orientating the intellectual process and methodology with the speaking voice of the intellectual. The vocation for representation is also the duty of representation. How, what, who, and on what terms to represent is therefore the pith of intellectual work. This means holding to the almost wistful, utopian humanism of Said's nevertheless resolutely grounded political insistence on fundamental principles – or Chauí's 'universal causes' – and the pursuit of human freedom. From within the neoliberal university there is something almost embarrassing about the audacity of this definition, but it nevertheless remains an incontestable political starting point for radical geographical thought.

¹⁸⁴ Freire, *Education for Critical Consciousness*, 9.

¹⁸⁵ On the question of political ecology and praxis see Loftus, 'Political Ecology as Praxis'.

Chapter Six: Reading Fragments: The International Environment and anti-colonialism

Introduction

The *Casa dos Estudantes do Império* [House of the Students of Empire] in Lisbon was a key site of anti-colonial resistance to the Portuguese empire, both in terms of intellectual production and political organization. From its inception in 1948 the Casa had published a literary and political journal, *Mensagem*. In February of 1964, at the back of *Mensagem*, they published a pamphlet, called '*Fome ou Abundância*'¹ [Hunger or Abundance]. The pamphlet was an overview of world hunger, and to all intents and purposes a précis of Josué de Castro's *Geopolítica da Fome*. It was the last thing the Casa ever published: they were shut down by the Portuguese imperial authorities shortly after. For twenty years its writers and activists had undergone the constant threat of repression, arrest, violence and censorship. *Fome ou Abundância* was part of a crescendo of political radicalism that led to the Casa's closure².

It is not surprising that anti-colonialists used the geography and geopolitics of hunger as a rallying cry. It is the counterpart political history to Enrique Dussel's recourse to hunger as the negative foundation of the philosophy of liberation, and the visceral premise of Fanon's *Wretched of the Earth*. Castro's was always a geography of colonialism, and the geography of the resistance to hunger was that of the resistance to the 'slavist, colonialist and imperialist orientation' of European (and North American) states³. His anti-colonialism went back to 1928, when he wrote an article called 'America Libre' [Free America]:

'we will reach this future slowly, like those who seek perfection. Stage by stage. From individualism to socialism. Throwing down first the preconceptions of class. Second, those of race. Third, those of nationality. Always tending towards total brotherhood'⁴.

Castro rarely wrote in this pan-Americanist, Marxist tone later in his career, but his early radicalism was always only restrained and repurposed, not abandoned.

At the back of *Fome ou Abundância?* alongside Castro, the author Álvaro Metus cites Yves Lacoste's *Os Países Sub-desenvolvidas* [Underdeveloped Countries]⁵. In the late 1960s Castro and Lacoste

¹ Mateus, 'Fome Ou Abundância?'

² Reza, 'African Anti-Colonialism and the Ultramarinos of the Casa Dos Estudantes Do Império'.

³ *Diário de Congresso Nacional*, 1960, Quinta-feira 17th November

⁴ Melo and Neves, *Josué de Castro*, 19.

⁵ Mateus, 'Fome Ou Abundância?'

worked together at a place widely lauded in the history of radical thought, but not considered in Anglophone histories of radical geography, the University of Vincennes, Paris VIII⁶. As Power and Sidaway argue, ‘attention to seemingly obscure branches of 20th-century academic geography has the capacity to enrich and disturb wider understandings of paradigm shifts in the discipline’⁷. Here I consider first Paris, and then more specifically Vincennes, between 1968 and 1973, as important places in the history of critical geography. I follow some of the same paths as Power and Sidaway: like them, I am interested in the paraphernalia of intellectual practice and the history of geography: inscriptions, course notes, dissertations and syllabi. Castro’s work at Vincennes is an important episode in the history of critical geography, as a scholar from the South embedded in a Northern institution. As so much of Castro’s work and life demonstrates, it is impossible to distil the Southern from the Northern here. There is no miraculous conception of knowledge from either North or South. This necessarily complicates the way in which we position post and decolonial critiques of the epistemology of geography: figuring European geography as hermetic in the first place is a false start. This is not to establish a straw man argument: clearly the issue at stake is the relative power of discourses, and postcolonial theory has not conceptualized traditions as distinct⁸. Yet insisting on the tangled and relational histories of geographical knowledge remains important.

Castro’s trans-modern biography shows us a Brazilian thinker addressing Brazilian and global social reality through commitment to pan-Americanism and liberation movements, but profoundly formed by deep readings of European and American philosophy and French geography⁹. If we are to place Castro in, or against, a tradition – or a canon¹⁰ – then it must be a canon which is already his own. Milton Santos’ trajectory is similar: moving between the North and South and engaging across and through this relationship, not re-locating from one side to another¹¹. That these scholars have been listened to less by Northern interlocutors than they themselves listened to European traditions is to Northern geography’s detriment. But it is not a question of absence, but of unequal epistemic exchange¹². This is to offer a relational history of geography which contributes a sustained attention to a set of positions – more precisely, as I outlined in Chapter Three, a continuous situated mobility – which are all already both in and outside European histories of thought. This elicits new objects of study, new empirical sources and interlocutors, and competing universalisms.

⁶ See for instance Dijan, *Vincennes*.

⁷ Power and Sidaway, ‘The Degeneration of Tropical Geography’, 587.

⁸ Mbembe et al., ‘What Is Postcolonial Thinking?’

⁹ Dussel, ‘Transmodernity and Interculturality’.

¹⁰ Keighren, Abrahamsson, and della Dora, ‘On Canonical Geographies’.

¹¹ This is a related, but slightly different argument to that of Melgaço, ‘Thinking Outside the Bubble of the Global North’.

¹² Halvorsen, ‘Cartographies of Epistemic Expropriation’.

This chapter places ‘Southern’ critical geography on environment and development in an important place and time in the history of European leftist thought: Paris, 1968, and the University of Vincennes. I am not interested in arguing, and nor is there evidence, that Castro was formulating critical geography over coffee with Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze. He was, however, circulating in similar spaces, and establishing his own kinds of radical salons. His appointment in 1968 filled Castro with enthusiasm for new plans, and he saw the conditions of the new university as an opportunity to develop his academic work in new and stimulating directions¹³. His presence, pedagogy and practice in Paris brought a distinct set of influences – dependency theory, Latin American radicalism, French regional geography, ecological politics, Northeastern thought and anti-imperialist histories – into distinctive forms and forums. These existed within an institutional and disciplinary frame different to those more often associated with radical geography’s origin stories, and outside the normalized trajectory of political ecology. I offer this history alongside what Power and Sidaway describe as the ‘degeneration’ of tropical geography into development geography, and its ‘refraction’ ‘into differing channels of modernization theory and a radical development geography of dependency’¹⁴. This chapter is also part of the history of the latter, but these subsections themselves ‘have splintered’¹⁵. The history of critical geography is a multi-lingual, multi-sited story. Existing histories are too quick to delimit their scope according to linguistic boundaries. The moment analysed here belies such separations. Taking Castro’s career at Vincennes as a starting point allows us to tie the history of critical geography more closely to wider radical intellectual movements, and to anti-colonial thought and practice. This, of course, constitutes a major departure from geography’s colonial past¹⁶. It is a new kind of story, against what Felix Driver called ‘geography militant,’ the servant of colonial adventurism. It is, as Manuel Correia de Andrade pronounced Josué de Castro’s work, ‘Geography Combatant’: the ally of anti-colonial praxis¹⁷.

In this chapter I read the partial and fragmentary texts of critical geography’s archive to access this counter-history. What remains from the five years he stayed at Vincennes is a distinctive corpus of largely unpublished and fragmentary late work of interest for a multilingual history of political ecology and critical geography. In it we can hear, perhaps, the kinds of intransigent radicalism that Said terms ‘late style’¹⁸. Picking up and twisting this idea of Said’s, I use it less to insist on a homogeneity of form in Castro’s own late writing, but to reflect in a more meta-textual vein on working with the archive which survives of this period. Castro’s late style is felt in the fragmentary and generative qualities of

¹³ Castro, ‘To Francisco Bandeira de Melo’.

¹⁴ Power and Sidaway, ‘The Degeneration of Tropical Geography’, 592.

¹⁵ Power and Sidaway, 592.

¹⁶ Driver, ‘Geography’s Empire’.

¹⁷ Andrade, ‘Josué de Castro e Uma Geografia Combatente’.

¹⁸ Said, *On Late Style*.

the sources used here. He did not write a great late work: his last completed full-length book was the novel *Homem e Caranguejos* [Of Men and Crabs] in 1967. But this was a time full of emendations, updates, articles, teaching, essay collections and, above all, uncompleted works. Books such as *The Geography of Despair*, a study on hunger in the United States, and a study of the Amazon all remained unfulfilled in the last decade of his life.

Places matter: Paris in the late 1960s and Stockholm in June 1972 provided the conditions of possibility for the exchange of ideas and the criss-crossings of

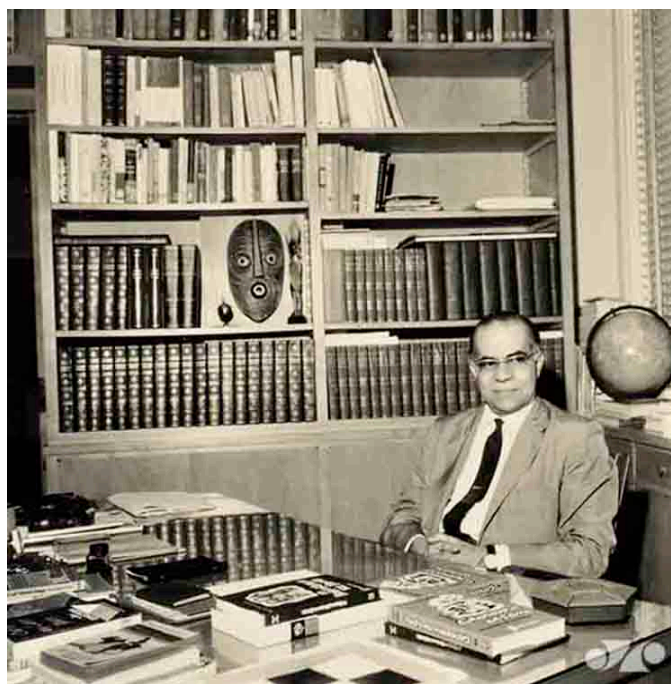


Figure 20: Josué de Castro in his study in Paris, 1970. Arquivo Fotográfico. Fundação Joaquim Nabuco.

biographical trajectories not only of French radicals, but Latin American exiles, African anti-colonialists and emerging coalitions of radical ecologists and international environmentalism. Here the biographical approach – despite its limitations – opens a chink in the door to see complicated, contingent and multi-lingual histories of ideas. This is not to simply add another fixed institutional site to the history of critical geography or political ecology: Vincennes+Berkeley=x. These networks are wider, too: João Sarmento's recent work reports how the Portuguese secret police were suspicious of critically minded geographers teaching with *Geografia da Fome* in Mozambique in the early 1970s¹⁹. These histories of thought are connected, and multiple, at the levels of network and place as well as at the levels of political and intellectual commitment and innovation. My work attempts to extend and complicate the history of political ecology laid out by Michael Watts, for instance, which – while an open, transnational and multi-sited account – nevertheless prioritizes North American universities in the 1980s²⁰. In terms of radical geography – in particular the narrative David Harvey gives of the anti-imperialist tendencies of young geographers in the early 1970s both around the journal *Antipode* and Doreen Massey and colleagues²¹ – it is perhaps to be regretted that there were not connections made between Castro in his last years, and anglophone radical geography in its first. What links Vincennes, Clark, Milton Keynes and Berkeley is not so much a set of academic citations as a set of shared, but

¹⁹ Sarmento, 'Portuguese Tropical Geography and Decolonization in Africa: The Case of Mozambique', 16–17.

²⁰ Watts, 'Now and Then: The Origins of Political Ecology and the Rebirth of Adaptation as a Form of Thought', 29–36; See also Leff, 'Power-Knowledge Relations in the Field of Political Ecology', 226–28.

²¹ Harvey, *Spaces of Capital*, 2001, 8–10.

open and contingent, understandings of the relationship between space, nature, history, environment and development.

A. Vincennes 1968-73: Pedagogy and Practice

Castro arrived at Vincennes in the autumn of 1968, just at the same time that David Harvey joined the faculty of John Hopkins. Unlike Harvey, in the early 1960s Castro had not been writing a *magnum opus* of geographical theory, to awake to find that politics had changed around him²², but had been continuing to be involved in Third Worldist politics, while teaching at the Sorbonne and elsewhere²³. Notwithstanding the global geography of '68'²⁴, this puts Castro at one of its most important sites, and one whose radicalism should itself be understood as multilingual, transnational and global. His personal archive suggests a lively interest in new social movements and the radical branches of European politics²⁵. He was inspired by student radicals' rejection of authority over the truth, admiring the graffiti on the Sorbonne's walls: '*Vous, propriétaires de la Vérité, abstenez-vous*' [You, the proprietors of Truth, give it a rest]²⁶. This fracturing of authority aligned with his own reassessment of ecological and philosophical thought²⁷. Castro never stopped working on hunger, and never disassociated environmental questions from those of social justice, but in this period he shows an increasing attention to environmental and ecological issues. He militated for academic and political action to understand the growing ecological crisis of globalizing modernity as produced by the same forces as Third World underdevelopment. This was a crucial part of his pedagogy and research at Vincennes²⁸, and then his involvement in the events in Stockholm in 1972.

Castro taught on many courses at Vincennes between 1968 and 73. Colleagues who recall his work in Paris – specifically Magda Zanoni and Alain Bué – emphasize his support for younger scholars in experimenting with new, political, approaches to human ecology²⁹. He 'appreciated [his younger colleagues'] modest attempt to link theory and practice,' and used his reputation to enable radical approaches to teaching³⁰. Documentation of the courses he taught or designed – in some cases their re-

²² Harvey, 5–7.

²³ Castro, 'Desarrollo, Ecología, Desarme y Descolonización'.

²⁴ Watts, '1968 and All That...'

²⁵ There are extensive newspaper and magazine clippings, for example, about May 1968 in Paris, including a number of articles about Marcuse, Sartre and the student movement. Eg file CEHIBRA.JdC.43

²⁶ Castro, 'Développement et Environnement'.

²⁷ Castro, *Adónde va?*, 22–24; Castro, 'Desarrollo, Ecología, Desarme y Descolonización'; See also Castro, 'Conférence du CERN'.

²⁸ Zanoni and Nascimento, 'Entrevista com Magda Zanoni', 425–26.

²⁹ Bué, 'Josué de Castro'.

³⁰ Bué.

writing can be observed across multiple drafts – give access to Castro’s pedagogical practice and late thought. Some surviving course outlines are gnomic one-page documents, while others are fully developed prose descriptions making the case for a particular approach to a sub-discipline or area. One ‘Introduction to Human Ecology’ argues that ‘the new geographical science cannot do without analyses of the environment and the application of ecological methods in the study of geographical spaces’³¹. These pithy comments, not formulated for academic publication, nevertheless constitute some evidence of Castro’s relationship with the revolution that took place in disciplinary geography in the 1970s. They show Castro reckoning with changes in geography, but insisting on the value of a ‘human ecology’ and regional approach within geographical science. We can see more clearly what he means in the detail of the course which covers what would become environmental geography³². The course covers ‘the impact of man on the biosphere’, pollution, demography and environmental degradation, the impact of development and growth, and the politics of protecting and restoring the environment³³.

Another course on the ‘Human Ecology of the Third World’ from the early 1970s is a good example of his still developing approach to human-environment relations. It covers familiar themes: the ‘Guano Complex’, the ‘mangrove ecosystem and community of Recife in the Northeast of Brazil’, sugar plantations, food chains and trophic resources, and ‘environment and development at the regional scale’ in the River Plate area of Argentina³⁴. The course notes that there is a lack of clear data about the Third World and its ecologies. They want to develop an approach, nevertheless, that enables the analysis of relations between people, the biotic environment, the habitat, nature and culture. Culture, they insist, can’t be ignored. Alain Bué, who was a research assistant on the course, described how Castro taught the geography of hunger in his classes: he would ask students to limit their diets to only 1600 calories per day and then attempt to write a dissertation for the seminar, or undertake physical work³⁵. This rather visceral approach was used to instil in students the wide-ranging effects of hunger. It seems unlikely it would be an endorsed pedagogical method in many universities today.

Castro connected a proto-environmental geography with a Third Worldist approach to underdevelopment. While avoiding a tendentious reading that sees Castro’s work summed up in the gnomic form of a course syllabus, there are intriguing references to topics of lifelong concern. For instance, following ecosystems and biomass in part two, part three covers: ‘Trophic links. Biogeochemical cycles. Flows of energy and food chains’³⁶. This seems to offer a development of the

³¹ Castro, ‘Initiation’.

³² Castree, Demeritt, and Liverman, ‘Introduction: Making Sense of Environmental Geography’.

³³ Castro, ‘Initiation’.

³⁴ Castro, Bué, and Zanoni, ‘Ecologie Humaine du Tiers Monde’.

³⁵ Bué, ‘Josué de Castro’.

³⁶ Castro, ‘Initiation’.

alternative intellectual history of metabolism that I have argued Castro can offer historians of political ecology³⁷. References to the foundation of life on earth, ‘living systems’ and ‘living matter’ have connections with later vitalist turns in geographical inquiry³⁸.

A fuller course outline also exists. A collaboration with two of his younger colleagues, Alain Bué and Magda Zanoni, it shows a greater interest in modern ecology than any other document of Castro’s career. It outlines ecological niches, auto-ecology, adaptation, synecology, population ecology, ecosystems, decomposition, edaphotopes (soil environments), climates and energy fluxes. It shows Castro working through understandings of energy flows within food chains. Castro connects his own geography of hunger with both a biological science concerned with the somatic and cellular scales of living beings, and ecological and environmental science³⁹. In his course on ‘Geography of Food and Hunger’ (*Geographie de l’Alimentation et de la Faim*), also from the early 1970s, Castro connects the study of hunger with the most basic processes of all living beings. As Chapter One argued, this was an important idea in his early work across nutrition and geography, but it is explicit in a different way here. Hunger itself has a biological quality whose ‘origin is in the relative richness in basic nutritional essentials on the inside of [...] cells, where the biochemical mechanisms of life take place’. This makes the biophysically relational geography of hunger clearer: the inside of cells and the environment are materially continuous with one another. Castro extends some of the essential formulations of a geography of hunger. Food has an ‘energetic function,’ a ‘plastic function’ (to structure living materiality), and a ‘regulatory function [...] to furnish the regulator elements of the metabolic process, that is to say, the ensemble of biochemical exchanges and transformations’. The course outline notes though that there is an important distinction to be made between the individual biochemical dynamics of hunger and the social qualities of ‘hunger in the world’⁴⁰, which needs a multidisciplinary approach. Hunger, he argues, is a point of contact between different disciplines, including ‘biogeography, psychology [and] bio-cybernetics’. It was this multidisciplinary optic, he argues, that ‘gave birth to a geography of hunger, to a geopolitics of hunger, to a sociology of hunger’. All of this must be seen, however, in a political context: ‘the struggle against hunger is worth something only if it is formulated within the optic of a struggle against the phenomenon of under-development’⁴¹. If Castro had fully developed these explorations they would have amounted to a new geography of hunger. Certainly they consist of an innovative approach to geography, particularly in a French context which Denis Gautier

³⁷ Davies, ‘Unwrapping the Oxo Cube: Josué de Castro and the Intellectual History of Metabolism’.

³⁸ Castro, ‘Initiation’.

³⁹ Castro, Bué, and Zanoni, ‘U.V. Ecologie Humaine du Tiers Monde’.

⁴⁰ Castro, ‘U.V. Geographie de l’Alimentation (i)’.

⁴¹ Castro, 7.

and Baptiste Hautdidier characterise as remaining ‘wedded to conventional dichotomies (in the Vidalian tradition), especially in its teaching – human/physical, urban/rural, regional/general’⁴².

The course entitled ‘Agrarian Structures and the Problem of Shantytowns in Latin America’ (*Les Structures Agraires et le Problème des Bidonvilles en Amérique Latine*), connected agrarian structures – *minifundia* and *latifundia* – with urban poverty and ‘*bidonvilles*’, a French term that roughly translates as ‘favelas’ or ‘shanty towns’. The course description lays out a multidisciplinary approach to this rural-to-urban geography and suggests that it will be of interest to historians, sociologists, urbanists and anthropologists. Students will approach the problem of urban poverty through studying ‘the origin, evolution and current status of agrarian structures’⁴³. In the second term Castro offers two further courses, on the Human Ecology of the Third World, and on Continental Central America. The courses offer a snapshot of Castro’s position in geographical history: still orientated by regional geography (re-formed, re-placed and critiqued), but on the cusp of the formulations of political ecology⁴⁴.

The reading lists, course outlines and materials studied here are an idiosyncratic source for geographical research. They are unfinished, partial, formulaic and institutionalized. Yet they are also full of potential for considering the actual historical undertaking of geographical work, above all, the teaching of geography. Castro was a teacher at many stages of his life and wrote an introductory textbook for human geography in Brazil, published in *Ensaio da Geografia Humana* (Essays in Human Geography). He also collaborated in 1937 with the well-known Brazilian author Cecília Meireles on a children’s book called *A Festa das Letras* [The Party of Letters], an educational book partly aimed at encouraging children to eat fruit⁴⁵. Elsewhere in his archive he kept essays written by students at the University of Brazil, as well as his course syllabi from the 1940s and 50s⁴⁶. The notes and course outlines from Vincennes are fragments of dialogic communication and pedagogy. As this thesis, in particular Chapter Three, has argued, all of Castro’s texts were amended, re-prefaced and re-edited by Castro following their publication (the word is significant: public-ation). He even annotated and corrected published newspaper versions of interviews he had given. Texts reveal themselves as unstable and changing. These teaching texts are particularly contingent: they are written to serve an ephemeral purpose for students, colleagues and the institution. They have very precise and particular publics at a specific moment in time and space. They would have circulated in particular ways: pinned on noticeboards, slipped into course handouts and passed between students’ hands. The geography they circulated in was important: corridors and lecture halls of a university explicitly seeking to re-construct the meaning of

⁴² Gautier and Hautdidier, ‘Connecting Political Ecology and French Geography: On Tropicality and Radical Thought’, 59.

⁴³ Castro, ‘Initiation’.

⁴⁴ As found in eg Bryant and Bailey, *Third World Political Ecology* in 1997.

⁴⁵ Castro and Meireles, *A Festa Das Letras*.

⁴⁶ Various, ‘Student Essays University of Brazil’.

the term, establishing new relationships between professors and students and new criteria for pedagogy, political commitment and standards of truth⁴⁷. Having written about the social function of universities⁴⁸ and been involved in Brazilian debates over the formation and structure of the new University of Brasília in the 1950s, it was not the first time Castro had been part of the birth of a new university with big dreams.

In the first semester of the 1972-3 academic year Castro taught three courses: on the agrarian structure of Latin America, an 'Introduction to Human Ecology', and an 'Introduction to Urban Ecology'. This latter is of particular interest. Castro's declaration of hours taught survives, in handwriting whose shakiness portends the ill health which was soon to lead to his death. In the 1973-4 academic year he was still listed as *professeur associé* [Associate Professor]⁴⁹. It seems, however, that though Castro designed the course on Urban Ecology, he likely never taught it⁵⁰. Listed elsewhere as also taught by Alain Bué and Magda Zanoni, the course studied open spaces and green areas in the city, with a focus on sites in Paris. Students were encouraged to investigate the urban ecologies of the city and to accompany the struggles of inhabitants being expelled by urban transformations. Castro brought a concern about urban dispossession, connected to an analytical attention to urban nature, developed in his hometown of Recife and outlined in Chapter Two, to Paris in the early 1970s⁵¹. This opening – a lost predecessor of urban political ecology – is another which Castro's death foreshortened.

By the time of the *rentrée* in 1975-76, however, not only had Castro passed away, but Bué and Zanoni had also moved on. Yves Lacoste had arrived and was an increasingly prominent figure in the department, and the structure of courses changed year on year. Interestingly, by the 1975 brochure, '*ecologie politique*' was officially a course taught to all first year geography undergraduates at Vincennes⁵². This opens onto a history of French political ecology which I do not have space to explore here. However, if Denis Gautier and Baptiste Hautdidier argue that the 'rich', but 'fissiparous' French tradition of *ecologie politique* 'has often been held back because of an insufficient regard for the role of politics in understanding human-environmental relations'⁵³, then perhaps Castro's role in this tradition is a fruitful area for further exploration. In particular in connection with the role of René Dumont, with whom Castro worked⁵⁴, he can perhaps be seen as a precursor to the '*tiers mondiste*'

⁴⁷ Dijan, *Vincennes*.

⁴⁸ Castro, 'A Função Social das Universidades'.

⁴⁹ Université paris 8, 'Programme de l'université Paris 8'.

⁵⁰ Castro, 'U.V. Introduction'.

⁵¹ Bué, 'Josué de Castro'.

⁵² Université paris 8, 'Institut de géographie: brochure 1975-76'.

⁵³ Gautier and Hautdidier, 'Connecting Political Ecology and French Geography: On Tropicality and Radical Thought', 57.

⁵⁴ eg for the edition Castro and Feio, *O drama do Terceiro Mundo*.

trajectory of work in French geography⁵⁵. In any case, following Castro's death, the story of geography at Vincennes is overtaken by the journal *Hérodote*, and the emergence of the strong geopolitical school of French geography.

It appears – from the later documents of the geography department – that Yves Lacoste picked up the teaching of the course on underdevelopment that Castro had designed in 1973. The courses changed their emphasis under Lacoste and turned to the Maghreb. To some extent we can see the framing of the latter's geography of underdevelopment as, at least initially, in dialogue with Castro's. However, their relationship was apparently conflictual.⁵⁶ Lacoste had written about Castro as early as 1962⁵⁷, and Castro used Lacoste's work in his own teaching. After Castro's death, rather than celebrating his former colleague, or explicitly engaging in academic dialogue, Lacoste was publicly sceptical of Castro on the grounds, apparently, that he pulled his analytical punches about capitalism and North American imperialism. At a colloquium in 2004, Lacoste went so far as to suggest that the *Geopolítica da Fome* was a project put into Castro's mind by the American ambassador to Brazil after the publication of *Geografia da Fome*. Lacoste says, largely in passing, that 'they' – the American government – 'had it translated into 40 languages'⁵⁸. The suggestion was that Castro was too close to the Americans, and that the worldwide dissemination of *The Geography of Hunger* was an American scheme. I have found no other evidence for this. Lacoste seems to be suggesting that the Americans' ploy was to use the book to defuse the critique of capitalism.

It is perhaps the case that the Geopolitics (the English *Geography*) muddies the waters of analysis, and is less politically sharp-elbowed than its predecessor. However, it is faintly ludicrous to claim that Castro lands in the North American camp. He called Robert MacNamara's US-driven policy of birth control 'almost genocidal'⁵⁹. He praised Soviet agriculture, he called for a revolution in Latin America against the dominance of North American economic imperialism and he assisted anti-imperialist struggles⁶⁰. If he was a stooge he was not a very good one. That he received American (and British) support – from his publisher – for the English version of *The Geography of Hunger* is clear. Where precisely the funds for that support came from the archive does not reveal, but his books sold tens of thousands of copies. Along with Castro's long-standing praxis against American state interests – witness, for example, his role in driving disarmament conferences at the UN fervently against American wishes, his work at the FAO in the teeth of American opposition, and his support for the Peasant

⁵⁵ Gautier and Hautdidier, 'Connecting Political Ecology and French Geography: On Tropicality and Radical Thought', 61–65.

⁵⁶ Rosière, 'La Géopolitique Au Brésil'.

⁵⁷ Lacoste, 'Le Sous-Développement'.

⁵⁸ 'Géopolitique de l'alimentation'.

⁵⁹ Rosembuj, 'Josué de Castro: las dudas de un pacifista'.

⁶⁰ Clodomir, 'Josué de Castro: Brasileiro e Cidadão Do Mundo'.

Leagues – all of this renders it extremely unlikely that Castro was a tool of the CIA. Indeed, brief research in some of their own digitized archives suggest the CIA internally saw Castro as an enemy. They listed an organization of which he was President in 1956 – ‘The World Congress of Doctors for the Study of Present Day Living Conditions’ – as a ‘Communist-Front Organization’⁶¹. The embassy in Brazil in 1962 and 1963 described Castro as ‘pro-Communist’ in their ‘Secret’ weekly Intelligence Summaries⁶². Lacoste’s accusation should, I think, be treated with a profound dose of scepticism. Castro’s relationship with Lacoste was clearly not good. One of Castro’s colleagues at the time, Magda Zandoni, argued that Lacoste effectively stole from Castro’s ideas without crediting him, and recounts that Lacoste sought to marginalize Castro at the department in a manner that Castro was unable to resist thanks to periods of severe depression and deteriorating physical health in the early 1970s⁶³. The broader problem with Lacoste’s critique is that it withdraws Castro’s own intellectual agency in a way reminiscent of many a European treatment of Third World intellectuals. For Castro, like many Third Worldist intellectuals, the cold war was not the primary concern⁶⁴. More importantly – and Lacoste is right to the limited extent that at times it can at times constitute a weakness in his analysis – Castro’s analytical framework was not capital and his framework was not materialist. In terms of the writing and reception of his work he proactively pursued contacts in both the socialist and capitalist worlds while resisting the manicheism of great power politics. In the early 1970s, in the emergence of international environmentalism, Castro found another outlet for this geopolitical framework.

B. Vincennes 1968-73: Research, the Amazon and the philosophy of action

At Vincennes Castro did not only teach, he conducted new research. He headed a research group on ecology, a role he assumed after Jean Cabot moved on in 1970. Prior to his arrival, the focus of research had been on French regions. Castro helped shift attention towards the Global South, and in particular an extensive research project on the Amazon⁶⁵. In Magda Zandoni’s account this emerged from Castro’s engaged pedagogic practice⁶⁶. Zandoni notes that this research group went on later to work on the environmental impacts of war in Vietnam (one of the outcomes of which was Yves Lacoste’s well-known single-authored work on the topic⁶⁷). The Amazon project, proposed by Castro but written collaboratively by graduate students and staff, sought interdisciplinary contributions. It was a

⁶¹ CIA, ‘Directories of the International Communist-Front Organizations and Communist Societies of Friendship and Cultural Relations’.

⁶² CIA, ‘Weekly Summary May 1963’.

⁶³ Zandoni and Nascimento, ‘Entrevista com Magda Zandoni’.

⁶⁴ See Bradley, ‘Decolonization, the Global South, and the Cold War, 1919-1962’, 465.

⁶⁵ Castro and Bué, ‘Rappel’.

⁶⁶ Zandoni, ‘Josué de Castro’.

⁶⁷ eg Lacoste, ‘Bombing the Dikes: A Geographer’s On-the-Site Analysis’.

collaboration between the university research group and the International Association on Living Conditions and Health, yet another international intellectual civil society body of which Castro was President. The Vincennes research group broke the traditional confines of the university with members based in the OECD, UNESCO and other institutions. The Amazon research was collaborative – reports were signed by the group, rather than individuals – and functioned in French. It is an interesting episode in a pre-history of political ecology.

Although not claiming a universal history of the discipline, Tom Perreault, James McCarthy and Gavin Bridge formulate the anglophone history of political ecology as emerging from a critique of cultural ecology and human ecology in the 1980s⁶⁸. Here in the early 1970s in the politicized milieu of Vincennes we can see precisely such an approach not only being taught, but formulated in research, as this group sought explicitly to make a political critique of human ecology⁶⁹. How this work on the Amazon related to the history of French political ecology remains largely the reach of my thesis, but the group also serves as a good example of how rigid linguistic boundaries in the history of geography need to be unsettled. It worked in French but with lusophone, Polish and other practitioners, with an intended international audience, initially with the Stockholm 1972 conference in mind, but with an eye on Latin American governments as well. Sidaway notes that ‘western geographical knowledge did not develop in a vacuum, away from prior non-western geographies. It *depended* upon them’⁷⁰. Equally we should emphasize the foundationally multi-lingual qualities of critical geography. These dependencies did not end with the emergence of radical geography in the second half of the twentieth century; the traffic across languages and traditions continues.

In terms of Stockholm 1972 the points of connection become blurry – how exactly the debates on demography and underdevelopment at and around that conference influenced the academic formulation of political ecology is not immediately legible. However, as clearly as Castro is part of the lusophone history of political ecology, he is part of its francophone history and should be part of its anglophone history. Furthermore, his episode at Vincennes inverts the traditional account of the direction of political ecological research, which sees Northern scholars in Northern Institutions studying the South. Here we have a scholar from the South taking a Northern Institution’s gaze and turning it on the tropics. North-South dividing lines are ultimately less than helpful: the historical geographies of knowledge are not reducible to such abstractions.

The Amazon report laid out the social and ecological threats to the region, sought to build a network of concerned institutions and agencies, and began to propose potential solutions for an international

⁶⁸ Bridge, McCarthy, and Perreault, ‘Editors’ Introduction’.

⁶⁹ Zanoni and Nascimento, ‘Entrevista com Magda Zanoni’.

⁷⁰ Sidaway, ‘The (Re)Making of the Western “Geographical Tradition”’, 75.

response to these threats. Castro publicised the group's work in the press⁷¹, as well as presenting it in Stockholm, where he took part in the civil society and independent sessions, held under the auspices of the Environment Forum⁷². At Stockholm, the Brazilian government responded aggressively to suggestions that the Amazon might be of international significance, emphasizing Brazilian sovereignty⁷³. This gives Castro's role in the report a particular personal significance. The report begins by arguing that current attitudes to the role of under-developed countries in environmental issues is based on false premises, and 'imprecise foundational concepts' of what 'the environment' and 'development' are: 'the environment is not only the ensemble of material elements that compose the mosaics of geographical landscapes, acting continually upon one another. The environment is much more than that. Equally part of the environment are the economic structures and the structures of thought of human groups who live in different geographic spaces'⁷⁴. The attention to the intersection, in place, between environment, development, 'structures of thought' and 'economic structures' is a precursor to what Peet and Watts would later outline in *Liberation Ecologies*, of 'regional discursive formations'⁷⁵. 'Ecology', Castro wrote in 1972, 'is the science of the future [...] the science of the "eco," of place'⁷⁶. This is a situated knowledge, as Chapter Four explored, Castro argued that 'each place will have its science, because science is not universal, it is local, it is a science of the region'⁷⁷. This geographical understanding emphasizes the situatedness of knowledge, placing the scale of the region at the epistemological heart of his political ecology: an ecology of nature profoundly emergent from the particularities of place. Where regional geography's methodology was universalist – a pure geographical rationality that could be applied anywhere – Castro is proposing a more dialectical understanding of the relationship between science and place, in which geographical investigation is contingent on the dynamics of place. Significantly, this insight emerges in association with a lament for the genocide of indigenous peoples across Latin America; a lament for their lost culture, and their lost science of place⁷⁸. Here we can see a kinship between the regional political ecologies Enrique Leff has recently outlined, and the importance of addressing power-knowledge relations in political ecology⁷⁹. Again Castro's work foreshadows important later debates in geographical knowledge.

⁷¹ Castro, 'To André Fontaine'.

⁷² Castro, 'To Elisabeth Wettergren, Environment Forum, Stockholm'.

⁷³ Emmelin, 'The Stockholm Conferences', 135–37.

⁷⁴ Castro, 'Proposition'.

⁷⁵ Peet and Watts, 'Liberation Ecology: Development, Sustainability, and Environment in an Age of Market Triumphalism', 15–16.

⁷⁶ Castro, 'Développement et Environnement', 58.

⁷⁷ Castro, 28.

⁷⁸ Castro, 27–29.

⁷⁹ Leff, 'Power-Knowledge Relations in the Field of Political Ecology'.

The concept of ‘environment’, the Amazon report argued, must include ‘the total impact of man and his culture on all other environmental elements, and the impact of mesological factors on the integral life of the human group [...] encompass[ing] biological, physiological, economic and cultural aspects, all connected in the same fabric of a dynamic ecology in permanent transformation’⁸⁰. The use of the term ‘mesology’ here is interesting. Mesology functions as a mediating concept, one which focuses on the relationships between organism and environment, rather than one or the other. It has recently become important for Augustin Berque, the geographer and philosopher, who uses it to translate the Japanese philosopher Watsuji’s term *fudo*, drawing on a history of French *mésologie* deriving from a ‘science of human milieux by the physician, statistician and demographer Louis-Adolphe Bertillon (1821–1883)’⁸¹. Castro, however, is more likely to have drawn the concept from other sources: either Brazilian, through Gilberto Freyre, or French, through Élisée Reclus.

Mesologia underpins Gilberto Freyre’s approach, in particular his later works⁸². In Freyre’s hands *mesologia* was allied to a quasi-determinist analysis of tropical modernity⁸³. For Reclus, on the other hand, *mésologie* allowed him to think through the differential forms of changes occurring both of and to environments⁸⁴. For Isabelle Lefort and Philippe Pelletier it is precisely in his mesological concerns that Reclus’ geographical investigations come closest to contemporary geography’s movement beyond nature/society dualisms⁸⁵. According to Berque, somewhat similarly, *mésologie* is part of an attempt to overcome such dualisms through an expanded ontology of being⁸⁶. Corinne Pelluchon has developed an approach to mesology in order to treat the problem of nourishment, ‘not as a simple ecological and health issue, but as one extending to the entire chain of relation, taking food, human physiology and pleasure, life, joy, living environment, politics, and the relationship with society into account’⁸⁷. Some affinities with Castro’s project are clear. Perhaps the most interesting development of mesology [*mesologia*] is in Amílcar Cabral’s work, what Reiland Rabaka has called Cabral’s ‘Revolutionary anticolonial mesology’⁸⁸, and Filipa César his ‘agronomy of liberation’⁸⁹. For Rabaka mesology is a ‘synonym’ of ecology, but he notes that it ‘also at one time meant the study of ways of

⁸⁰ Castro, ‘Proposition’, 4.

⁸¹ Berque, ‘Offspring’, 391.

⁸² Souza, *A Modernização Seletiva*, 205–52.

⁸³ Tavolaro, ‘Gilberto Freyre and the Brazilian “Tropical Modernity”’.

⁸⁴ Lefort and Pelletier, ‘Élisée Reclus ou la condition géographique’.

⁸⁵ Lefort and Pelletier; Though this is subject to some debate. See Guest, ‘Environmental Awareness and Geography: Reading Reclus Ecocritically?’

⁸⁶ Berque, ‘The Perceptive Relation in Mesology’; Berque, ‘Offspring’.

⁸⁷ Saburo, ‘About Fragmentation and Divergence’, ix; See also Pelluchon, ‘What Does It Mean to Replace Ecology with Mesology and Resources with Nourishment?’

⁸⁸ Cabral, *Resistance and Decolonization*.

⁸⁹ César, ‘Meteorisations’.

attaining happiness. Etymologically, mesology refers to a discourse concerning mediality and the betweenness of things, and its historical double significance in regard to ecological and eudemonic matters helps to best characterize Cabral's political thought'. Cabral's praxis, he argues, 'involves the decolonization of adverse environmental conditions imposed on various forms of human and non-human life'⁹⁰, as well as being deeply embedded in the geographical and environmental realities of the spaces of decolonization. Following Cesar, further exploration of mesology – Berque's, Pelluchon's and, in particular Cabral's – could be fruitful ground for anglophone political ecology, if the term's differentiation from existing understanding of ecology can be firmly established.

Returning to the Amazon report of 1972, however, mesology is used within a conception of the environment inseparable from the context of under-development, and colonialist economic formations. 'Underdeveloped countries who struggle to survive are forced to interest themselves in the problems of development and environment at the global scale, in order to defend themselves against the aggressions that their environment has been subjected to for centuries by colonialist metropolises, destroyers of their human condition'⁹¹. Here Castro has added a crucial component to his longstanding geography of hunger: colonialist development models are not only an attack on the human condition through hunger, but through pollution and environmental degradation: 'the economic degradation of underdeveloped countries must be considered as a pollution of their human environment, provoked by the economic abuses of the dominant zones of the world economy'⁹².

The Amazon research project emerged as Castro and others were denouncing the Club of Rome's *Limits to Growth* report. Indeed, according to Alain Bué, Castro was asked by UNESCO to co-ordinate a response to the Club of Rome⁹³. The Vincennes report contains a sophisticated conception of the plasticity of natural systems, and their ability to respond to pollution and human activity, while noting that going 'beyond certain limits [...risks] provoking great, sometimes fatal, ruptures in the ecosystem'⁹⁴. The report describes the environmental and developmental risks facing the Amazon, with particular reference to the importance of mangrove ecosystems, as well as to the erosion of soils under plantation agriculture⁹⁵. It outlines the considerations necessary for a 'balanced development' of the Amazon to be achieved, including warnings of pollution, deforestation, exploitation and avoiding at all costs the 'sub-proletarianization' of indigenous peoples, amid the risk of a long-term 'ethnocide'⁹⁶.

⁹⁰ Rabaka, 'Amílcar Cabral and Critical Theory'.

⁹¹ Castro, 'Proposition', 4.

⁹² Castro, 5.

⁹³ Personal Communication, January 26th 2019

⁹⁴ Castro, 'Proposition', 5.

⁹⁵ Castro, 6–7.

⁹⁶ Castro, 18.

Even in the absence of a knowledge of climate change (although it does cite the forest's role in replenishing atmospheric oxygen), the report reads as an eerie foretaste of the devastation of the Amazon that was to pick up pace over ensuing decades. Castro and his colleagues were mounting 'a radical critique of the pressure-of-population-on-resources view of environment and point[ed] to the need for a rethinking of both conservation and development' that Peet and Watts credit Blaikie and Brookfield's work with achieving some fifteen years later, in the late 1980s⁹⁷. Proving precedence is not particularly interesting, and others give various timelines of both political ecology⁹⁸ and critical development studies⁹⁹, but it is significant that all of these concerns are at work in the geography department at Vincennes in the late 1960s. This is not to forge a *new* origin myth of political ecology or critical development studies; other alternative histories could be written. The point, rather, is to multiply intellectual histories in order to expand concepts and disciplinary reference points. It is also to deepen an alternative story in which a constellation of influences forged a critical perspective on environment and development across languages and continents and out of anti-imperialist geographical practice and Southern thought.

In the Amazon report, addressing the UN Stockholm Conference's focus on 'action', Castro and his collaborators discuss practical steps to halt the destructive development of the Amazon, and address the pollution and degradation of ecosystems. They insist that 'action, even in this extreme case, must be based on a set of knowledges adequately developed in a manner that can constitute the basis for a philosophy of action'. It is precisely *geography* which can provide this. Through its sophisticated, holistic interpretation of the dialectical interactions between the complex plasticities of ecosystems and the economic, political and cultural dynamics of social and environmental transformation, geographical research is represented as the necessary prerequisite for political and economic action. This is a distinctive development from a persistent interest in hunger to a recognizably environmentalist – and political ecological – position. This is the late fruit of Castro's 'combatant geography'.

We can, in the Amazon report, see at least part of what Castro thought the role of the public geographer was, in terms of international environmental policy: to critique and challenge the terms by which 'environmental' and 'developmental' interventions proceeded. Castro, by 1972, had come to conceive of geography as a 'philosophy of action.' This can be placed alongside other understandings of the political role of geography, not least in the direction that Milton Santos later developed the concept of the 'active role of geography'¹⁰⁰. If political ecology 'can be fruitfully understood as a terrain of debate

⁹⁷ Peet and Watts, 'Liberation Ecology: Development, Sustainability, and Environment in an Age of Market Triumphalism'.

⁹⁸ Watts, 'Now and Then: The Origins of Political Ecology and the Rebirth of Adaptation as a Form of Thought', 30–34.

⁹⁹ On the history of critical development studies see Simon, 'Postdevelopment' and; Potter and Conway, 'Development'.

¹⁰⁰ Pedrosa, 'The Long Journey of Milton Santos's Exile and the Formation of His Network of Cooperation'; Bernardes et al., 'The Active Role of Geography'.

over which the role of theory and practice come to be considered and contested', this version of geography as a philosophy of action is an important contribution¹⁰¹. Action was not only that of the UN or environmental agencies, but a broader political idea: 'struggles against underdevelopment cannot succeed if they do not take into consideration the environment within whose context one desires to change the mechanism and the speed of the process of development'¹⁰². In other words, environmental damage is a consequence of underdevelopment, and struggles for liberation must take into account the ecological complex within which they unfold. Geography as a 'philosophy of action,' also constitutes an ecological contribution to strategic questions of anti-colonial struggle. Much more work on the ecological thinking of anti-colonial struggles would be productive for political ecology. Amílcar Cabral's work – his 'Revolutionary Anticolonial Mesology'¹⁰³, but more broadly his profound geographical instincts and deep empirical agronomic research¹⁰⁴ – would be a good place to start.

These were all immediate concerns, but Castro's intellectual practice was always multi-faceted and anti-dogmatic. While pursuing this philosophy of action Castro did not limit himself to timely and 'policy-relevant' modes of intervention. On the contrary, he retained a belief in the value of humanist writing and research. Ever a maker of plans¹⁰⁵, he had, at the same time as the report was being developed, sketched out a more ambitious writing project on the Amazon which would begin from 'the immoderation of nature' and 'the solitude of man', to analyse dreams of colonizing the 'green paradise' of the Amazon, its 'second discovery' and the threats of development¹⁰⁶. This fuller project, like many of his later ideas sketched out in notebooks and typescripts, was never undertaken.

C. Stockholm 1972: Underdevelopment and International Environmentalism

As well as constituting valuable reflections on the concept of the environment, the Amazon report was a political – and policy-oriented – intervention targeted at the UN Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm in June 1972, the first major international conference on global environmental problems. An undoubtedly important moment in the history of international environmentalism¹⁰⁷, it is often characterized as the beginning of the path towards sustainable development and the hegemony of liberal environmentalism¹⁰⁸. However, a closer attention to the

¹⁰¹ Loftus, 'Political Ecology as Praxis', 180.

¹⁰² Castro, Bué, and Zanoni, 'Ecologie Humaine du Tiers Monde'.

¹⁰³ Rabaka, 'Amílcar Cabral and Critical Theory'.

¹⁰⁴ Parsa, 'Review: Amílcar Cabral, Resistance and Decolonization', 1032–34.

¹⁰⁵ Silva, 'Josué por ele mesmo: o diário', 47–49.

¹⁰⁶ Castro, 'Sketch of Amazon Book Project'.

¹⁰⁷ McCormick, *Reclaiming Paradise*, 97–106.

¹⁰⁸ Bernstein, 'Liberal Environmentalism'; Bernstein, 'Ideas'.

genesis, geographies and politics of the conference shows that Stockholm was at the headwaters of a much more broadly contested political argument about the environment, development and the politics of nature. The Stockholm process was always cleaved by politics: whether of the cold war and the status of East Germany in the negotiations, or in fundamental arguments over questions of environment and development. In Stockholm in that summer two kinds of events took place with different genealogies and spatialities. On the one hand a formal, interior-world of official delegates – what Carl Death calls ‘summit theatre’¹⁰⁹ – and a mildly chaotic, sprawling world of unofficial events including hippies, deep ecologists, indigenous groups and activist scholars. These have different and competing histories. Their concerns and world-views clashed. There were attempts to bridge the gap – as, for example, when the Secretary General of the Conference, Maurice Strong sought to take part in civil society actions¹¹⁰ – but the tensions between them provides a historical snapshot of the contested formal and subaltern geopolitics of environmental thinking which emerged before 1972 and has continued ever since. Video footage that remains of Stockholm, and reports about it¹¹¹, demonstrate the cleavages between the inside and the outside of the conference hall, and the importance of what Craggs and Mahoney call knowledge, performance and protest in this moment of emergent environmental geopolitics¹¹². In these dynamics we find Castro on the outside, taking his part in the heterogenous mix of voices of international environmental civil society.

Alain Bué, who travelled from Vincennes to Stockholm with Castro to take part in the conference and present the Amazon report, suggests that Castro was one of the authors of a response to the intergovernmental conference’s announcement (which was later unpicked) of a moratorium on the killing of whales. The response proposed a moratorium on the killing of humans¹¹³. This became an important part of the declaration made outside the conference hall by activists¹¹⁴. The Environment Forum held the myriad organizations and individuals who flocked to Stockholm to try to influence proceedings, constituting one of the key founding moments of the international environmental movement not as a coherent or linear phenomenon, but as a contested history of protest and struggle¹¹⁵. On panels there Castro spoke virulently against the Club of Rome and its Limits to Growth report¹¹⁶. Perhaps more interestingly, Castro also gave an interview to French television in which he endorsed a

¹⁰⁹ Death, ‘Summit Theatre’.

¹¹⁰ See the film Evenson and Evenson, *Long Live Life*.

¹¹¹ Emmelin, ‘The Stockholm Conferences’.

¹¹² Craggs and Mahony, ‘The Geographies of the Conference’.

¹¹³ Bué, ‘Josué de Castro’.

¹¹⁴ Evenson and Evenson, *Long Live Life*.

¹¹⁵ Death, ‘Disrupting Global Governance’.

¹¹⁶ Unknown, ‘L’événement Stockholm’.

somewhat dramatic – but now increasingly familiar¹¹⁷ – element of ecological political discourse: fear, he said, was necessary, in the face of ecological disaster¹¹⁸. All of this places Castro within the growing ecology movement, whose radical element got significant impetus from the gatherings around Stockholm¹¹⁹.

The Brussels newspaper *Le Soir* recounted the unsettling and clamorous meetings that echoed around the city outside the central conference. Its article – with the headline ‘Josué de Castro: first, struggle against colonialism’ – places Castro, and his anti-colonial message, at the centre of this conflict¹²⁰. Castro was also cited by UNESCO as one of the Environment Forum’s spokespeople¹²¹. This is a misleading term, as the names reveal the internal contradictions in this emerging international environmental civil society: alongside Castro, UNESCO lists the incommensurate figures of Margaret Mead, Barry Commoner and Paul Ehrlich. Ehrlich and Castro were on diametrically opposed ends of one of the key questions of the moment, population, about which Ehrlich and Commoner were also in the midst of a heated public dispute¹²². The *Time* magazine reporter recounted vigorous disputes: ‘at the scientist’s Environment Forum, Stanford Biologist Paul Ehrlich blamed half the world’s environmental problems on increases in population. A woman biologist from Nigeria, aided by four burly colleagues, startled the audience by seizing Ehrlich’s microphone and declaring that birth control was merely a way for the industrial powers to remain rich by preserving the status quo. Peace was restored only after Ehrlich conceded that the US should curb its own consumption of natural resources before urging population controls on developing countries. Brazilian Economist Josué de Castro fumes at the very mention of birth control. “Genocide of the unborn!” he charges’¹²³. According to other reports Castro was even clearer, and framed population control in racial terms: it was a ‘genocide against the coloured peoples of the world’¹²⁴. The ‘woman biologist from Nigeria’ is almost certainly Dora Obi Chizea¹²⁵, a member of the *Oi* group, who objected to the make up of the forum. The split between a rightist, Malthusian ecologism, and a leftist, Third Worldist environmentalism, cut through the proceedings. The *Oi* group insisted on altering who spoke, when, and from what positions of power¹²⁶. Further

¹¹⁷ Swyngedouw, ‘Apocalypse Now! Fear and Domsday Pleasures’.

¹¹⁸ Unknown, ‘L’événement Stockholm’.

¹¹⁹ Death, ‘Disrupting Global Governance’.

¹²⁰ Anonymous, ‘Josué de Castro: d’abord lutter contre le colonialisme’.

¹²¹ UNESCO, ‘Conferences Parallel to the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment’, 1.

¹²² Egan, Barry Commoner and the Science of Survival, 133–34.

¹²³ Ungeheuer, ‘A Stockholm Notebook’.

¹²⁴ Anonymous, ‘Man vs Man Not Man vs Nature, Commoner Tells Overflow Crowd’; See also Rosembuj, ‘Josué de Castro: las dudas de un pacifista [Josué de Castro, the doubts of a pacifist]’.

¹²⁵ See Chizea, Population and Africa.

¹²⁶ Björk, ‘Emergence’.

research on the other Third Worldist activists and thinkers involved in Stockholm in 1972 would be worthwhile to explore these trends, of which Castro's biography reveals only one. Paul Ehrlich reflected on these bothering scenes, arguing that there was 'a crying need for quiet conferences'¹²⁷, where politics would be kept on the sidelines. He does not refer to Castro by name, but attacks what he refers to as 'pseudo-leftists', and apparently ignorant 'third world' voices. He recalls, bitterly, the 'familiar accusations of genocide'¹²⁸. Ehrlich doesn't suggest that the repeated charges of genocide encouraged him to rethink his positions. International environmental civil society emerged already riven by conflict, with critical voices from the South demanding to be heard and emphatically changing the tenor and practice of debate. International environmentalism was neither a Northern invention, nor a harmonious unity¹²⁹.

In the aftermath of the conference, Castro published an important piece in the UNESCO magazine, *The Courier*. Enrique Leff and Carlos Walter Porto-Gonçalves have recently traced from this piece a genealogy of Latin American political ecology through the 1970s and beyond¹³⁰. The article was, in fact, very largely based on the unpublished Amazon report. As this Chapter shows, it is therefore only one spring of a deeper source of geographical theory and geopolitical practice. Engaging in an international epistemological dispute over the environment and development, the article reworks and reiterates the arguments made in the Amazon report, emphasizing Castro's nuanced and multi-faceted understanding of the relationship between development and environment to argue that the most important cause of environmental degradation is underdevelopment¹³¹. Here Castro makes a spatial and epistemic argument key to an anti-colonial history of political ecology:

'if it is only recently that people have come to talk insistently about the pollution and degradation caused by economic growth, this is because Western civilization, with its scientific and ethnocentric approach, has always refused to see what is obvious: that the hunger and poverty of certain far-off regions form part of the social price mankind pays so that economic development may advance in a few economically and politically dominant regions'¹³².

The strands of Latin American political ecology that Leff and Porto-Gonçalves identify have largely preceded without anglophone political ecology paying great attention. At Stockholm in 1972 Castro was engaging in a resolutely international field, but his relations with anglophone critical scholarship and the various strands of New Left thinking remained surprisingly limited. Though he gave many

¹²⁷ Ehrlich, 'A Crying Need for Quiet Conferences'.

¹²⁸ Ehrlich, 31.

¹²⁹ See for example McCormick, *Reclaiming Paradise*, 103–5.

¹³⁰ Porto-Gonçalves and Leff, 'A Ecologia Política Na América Latina', 70–71.

¹³¹ Castro, 'Pollution Problem No. 1', 20.

¹³² Castro, 22.

visiting lectures, and had a deep relationship with some British intellectuals and politicians, Castro did not work at any institutions based in the UK or the United States. Though I know of no equally traumatic exchange as that of Milton Santos' at UCL – his leaving a year-long appointment after eight days because of racism while trying to find housing in London – academic exchange and recognition in either Britain or the United States is a noteworthy missing feature of Castro's life, particularly after exile. Castro presented his work at anglophone international geographical conferences, for instance in New York in 1970 at a conference of the American Geographical Society¹³³, and he took part in seminars and conferences but it seems that he somewhat lost interest in chasing a North American or British audience. There is a contrast between such later absences and the energy which he applied to establishing nutritional and geographical networks in the United States in the 1940s and 1950s. Absences are difficult to interpret, but this is put into relief by his involvement in French circles, not only academically but as a writer and expert on Latin America in publications such as *Le Monde*¹³⁴ and *Le Monde Diplomatique*¹³⁵.

There are some exceptions, and the archive reveals opaque but intriguing linkages. For example, the files in Recife contain a typescript of a televised lecture given by Peter Worsley – a sociologist and influential figure in the British New Left, particularly in relation to the idea of the third world¹³⁶ – at Manchester University in January 1969 on 'The Revolutionary Theories of Frantz Fanon.' It is addressed, by hand, from Worsley to Castro, and in it Worsley makes use of Castro's work on the Northeast while examining the significance of Fanon's conception of revolutionary action¹³⁷. How and where Worsley and Castro met remains unclear.

It was after his death that Castro has a concrete place in the emergence of radical geography as such. A few important figures trace this role: Yves Lacoste, Milton Santos, Ben Wisner and Keith Buchanan. Lacoste had positioned himself as the *enfant terrible* of French geography since the 1960s¹³⁸, but it was not until 1976 that he published, through the radical publisher Maspero, his polemical *La Géographie, ça sert d'abord à faire la guerre* [Geography serves first of all to make war]. In that same year he also founded *Hérodote*, also published by Maspero. The influence of *Hérodote* in anglophone (and Italian and other) geography and geopolitics was significant in one very particular sense: its interview with

¹³³ Castro, 'La Production Mondiale et Sa Repartition [World Production and Its Distribution]'.

¹³⁴ See for example Niedergang, 'L'Alliance Contre Le Progrès'; Niedergang, 'Josué de Castro avait longtemps crié dans le désert...'.

¹³⁵ See for example Castro, 'Formation Humaine'; Castro, 'Un danger pour la paix'; Castro, 'Révolution ou stagnation'; Dumont, 'Tout pays'.

¹³⁶ See for example Worsley, 'Revolution of the Third World'; Worsley, 'How Many Worlds?'

¹³⁷ Worsley, 'The Revolutionary Theories of Frantz Fanon'.

¹³⁸ Giblin, 'Herodote et l'école Française de Geopolitique'.

Michel Foucault in 1976 has been a key text for some branches of critical geography¹³⁹. This interview also attests to the journal's roots in Vincennes¹⁴⁰. Yet *Hérodote* largely remained a French-orientated project, with strictly limited engagement with anglophone debates¹⁴¹. The same is true reciprocally. Most anglophone geographers, with the exception of a few scholars of geopolitics such as Gearóid Ó Tuathail, overlooked the French geopolitical school¹⁴², in what has been called 'a history of missed connections, occasional influence and mutual incomprehension if not outright indifference'¹⁴³. Furthermore, Lacoste as a channel for Castro's influence is compromised by the antipathetic tenor of their relationship, outlined above.

Milton Santos, on the other hand, is a much more fruitful conduit. Santos linked perhaps the two most important early journals of radical geography, being involved in the early days of both *Hérodote* and *Antipode*¹⁴⁴. In the second edition of *Hérodote* Santos engaged in a slightly frosty exchange with Lacoste, disputing Lacoste's characterization of Marx's silence on the question of space¹⁴⁵. (The piece strongly bears out Ferretti's point that the relationship between French and Brazilian geography should not be considered a one-way traffic of influence North to South¹⁴⁶.) But in spite of philosophical differences with Lacoste, Santos continued to publish in *Hérodote* in the late 1970s¹⁴⁷. Santos also played an important role in bringing a Third Worldist Brazilian consciousness to *Antipode*'s work, editing issues of the journal while based at the University of Dar-Es-Salaam in 1973. Santos edited an early edition of *Antipode* on 'Geography, Marxism and Underdevelopment'. The edition responds to Harvey's *Social Justice and the City*, while also critiquing radical geography for its anglophone bias. Santos' piece in the edition was translated by Anne Buttimer from French, while Santos was working at an anglophone university in Dar Es Salaam. The negotiations of translation can't be overlooked here. Power and Sidaway argue that Santos was 'an agent through whom dependency ideas and geography were articulated, but the points of contact and circulation were complex'¹⁴⁸. *Antipode* provided one of the vectors for this contact and circulation¹⁴⁹. *Hérodote* in Paris provided another. Santos did not,

¹³⁹ Dell'Agnese et al., 'Geo-Graphing: Writing Worlds', 442.

¹⁴⁰ See for example Smith and Katz, 'Grounding Metaphor: Towards a Spatialized Politics'.

¹⁴¹ Sidaway, 'The Geography of Political Geography'.

¹⁴² Hepple, 'Geopolitical Traditions'.

¹⁴³ Gautier and Hautdidier, 'Connecting Political Ecology and French Geography: On Tropicality and Radical Thought', 60.

¹⁴⁴ Amaral et al., 'Entrevista com o professor Milton Santos'.

¹⁴⁵ Santos, 'Silence de Marx?'

¹⁴⁶ Ferretti, 'French-Brazilian Geography'.

¹⁴⁷ eg Santos, 'De La Société Au Paysage'.

¹⁴⁸ Power and Sidaway, 'The Degeneration of Tropical Geography', 598.

¹⁴⁹ For assessment of Santos' role in this period of critical geography see Pedrosa, 'The Long Journey of Milton Santos's Exile and the Formation of His Network of Cooperation'; Davies, 'Milton Santos'; Melgaço, 'Thinking Outside the Bubble of the Global North'; Melgaço and Prouse, 'Milton Santos and the Centrality of the Periphery'.

however, cite Castro's work in these interventions. In this period Santos was developing a Marxist approach to social and spatial formations, in which Castro's less Marxist-oriented scholarship fits awkwardly. Nevertheless, as mentioned above, and in Ferretti and Pedrosa's work, we know that Castro and Santos were in contact, and at a foundational level the Pernambucan had been a key formative influence in the Bahian's geographical thought.

In *Antipode* there was an intermittent tradition of attempts to explore and analyse traditions of critical geography in other languages¹⁵⁰. *Antipode*'s own roots were to some extent spatially diverse and multi-lingual. The first issues of the journal were edited by Ben Wisner, a political ecologist working on underdevelopment, risk and disasters. Wisner was perhaps the anglophone geographer with the widest critical awareness of Josué de Castro's work¹⁵¹, and he worked with Milton Santos at the University of Dar Es Salaam between 1972 and 1974¹⁵². Castro is also referenced by David Slater in his articles on geography and underdevelopment¹⁵³. Perhaps one of the reasons his influence never became fully fledged, however, was precisely the turn towards a Marxist theoretical basis for radical geography, closely associated with David Harvey's work, which took place in the first years of the 1970s¹⁵⁴. As Enrique Leff puts it in his account of the power-knowledge relations of political ecology, 'at play here is the recognition or not of academic peers, the attractiveness of some theories and disciplinary engagements that lead researchers to explore and accept some sources of inspiration and reject and disregard others when establishing their academic identity'¹⁵⁵. However, as Sharad Chari has noted, it is worth picking apart the differences between North-American schools: the Berkeley group were more oriented towards Third Worldist and agrarian studies approaches¹⁵⁶. It is, therefore, perhaps not surprising that it is one of the key proponents of the Berkeley tendency, Michael Watts, who later credited Castro with being an important early thinker in this regard, writing in 1983 that 'the brilliant Brazilian geographer spent much of his academic life wrestling with [the changing forms of the human appropriation of nature] [...] freeing the discussion of Third World peasant food supply from its Malthusian shackles and situating it within the context of the political economy of underdevelopment'¹⁵⁷. Watts' brilliant epic on famine references Castro a few times, but in a limited way. It is, in fact, this kind of passing interest in Castro which first helped pique my own interest: if he

¹⁵⁰ Lévy, 'French Geographies of Today'; Folke, 'The Development of Radical Geography in Scandinavia'.

¹⁵¹ See for instance Wisner, 'Book Review'; Wisner, Weiner, and O'Keefe, 'Hunger'; Wisner, 'Does Radical Geography Lack an Approach to Environmental Relations?'; See also Carter, 'Population Control'.

¹⁵² Johnson, Wisner, and O'Keefe, "'Theses on Peasantry" Revisited', 952.

¹⁵³ Slater, 'Geography and Underdevelopment'; Slater, 'Geography and Underdevelopment—Part II*'.

¹⁵⁴ Peet, 'Radical Geography in the United States'.

¹⁵⁵ Leff, 'Power-Knowledge Relations in the Field of Political Ecology', 229.

¹⁵⁶ Chari, 'Trans-Area Studies and the Perils of Geographical "World-Writing"', 792–93.

¹⁵⁷ Watts, *Silent Violence*, xix–xx.

is cited as a significant predecessor for the analysis of the political economy of hunger, why has his broad range of work remained relatively unexplored?

Keith Buchanan, meanwhile, had been drawing on Castro's work from the early 1960s, discussing Castro's interventions not only with regards population, but on colonialism and under-development¹⁵⁸. In *Antipode* in 1973 he drew quite extensively on Castro in his piece on 'The White North and the Population Explosion', deploying Castro's anti-Malthusianism, but also his concern for environmental questions¹⁵⁹. Perhaps the most important shared impulse, however, was the insistence on dealing with political and ideological questions within geographical inquiry, and on a radical humanist starting point for geography¹⁶⁰. This was a position Buchanan became well known for¹⁶¹, and it is one he shared deeply with Castro. These ebbs and flows of references, influence and friendship put Castro alongside mainstream accounts of the emergence of anglophone critical geography. I have not had the space to explore the breadth and complex flows of these histories, or the multiple accounts of them¹⁶². Rather, I use Castro's biography as an opening, and as a synecdoche for a much more complex picture.

Conclusion

This brings me back to the concerns of this thesis, in particular those of Chapter One: Castro's negative geography¹⁶³, survival, metabolism, hunger, and the philosophy of liberation. We can, I surmise, see some of Castro's influence in the early framing of *Antipode* as a journal of 'Studies in Survival and Radical Geography,' as it announced itself in 1970¹⁶⁴. In 1973 William Bunge published his 'geography of human survival'¹⁶⁵, and the recent interest in the geography of survival is a fresh return to an early interest of anglophone critical geography. Through Castro we can see how other traditions have long been concerned with such questions. As Nik Heynen puts it, 'radical geography should first and foremost be about recognizing that life depends on meeting material basic needs like food, water, shelter, etc. I think we must make meeting these fundamentals of life the core of our project, rather than taking them as somehow implied'¹⁶⁶. Castro is an ally, a resource and a forebear for what Heynen calls

¹⁵⁸ Buchanan, 'The Third World'; Buchanan, *The Southeast Asian World*; See also Chomsky, *At War with Asia*, 11.

¹⁵⁹ Buchanan, 'White North', 8.

¹⁶⁰ Watters, 'The Geographer as Radical Humanist', 8.

¹⁶¹ Binns, 'Marginal Lands, Marginal Geographies', 588.

¹⁶² For which see, for example, Harvey, 'On the History and Present Condition of Geography'; Harvey, *Spaces of Capital*, 2001; Barnes, 'Rethorizing Economic Geography'; Barnes, 'Lives Lived and Lives Told'; Barnes and Sheppard, "'Nothing Includes Everything'".

¹⁶³ Castro, *Geography of Hunger*, 13.

¹⁶⁴ Wisner, 'Introduction'; See also Castree et al., *The Point Is to Change It*, 12:p.3.

¹⁶⁵ Bunge, 'The Geography of Human Survival'.

¹⁶⁶ Heynen, "'But It's Alright, Ma, It's Life, and Life Only'", 920.

this ‘really radical geography’, in which radicalism *is* survival. Through the blood and sugar of metabolism, the urban scuttle of the cycle of the crab, the ruptures of translation, the distension of regional geography, the chronic commitment of the intellectual and the growing pains of political ecology, this brings us back with fresh eyes to the idea with which this thesis, and Josué de Castro, started: *a alma da fome é politica*: the soul of hunger is politics.

Conclusion

Photographs of Josué de Castro from the early 1970s show him looking old and drawn, beyond his 65 years. Death came to Castro in his office in Paris, in the form of a heart attack. His troubled relationship with the Brazilian state continued after he died. He had been trying to return to Brazil, and his family continued to fight bureaucratic barriers as they sought to move his body back there for burial. Eventually, posthumously, he was granted a passport. He was buried in the cemetery of São João Batista in Rio de Janeiro. But Castro's death is not really the end of this story. After he died his work took on new meanings and forms as it passed through the hands of military censorship, rural social movements, academic geographers, and urban musicians. I began this thesis with three quotations, from Chico Science, Milton Santos and former President Lula. The elegiac mode at the end of a work of biography has the same risks of self-indulgence as the tone of hagiography and homage which these epigraphs threatened. Nevertheless, these quotations show not only that Castro remains a presence in Brazilian political and cultural discourse today, but how malleable his legacy can be. My own thesis has bent Castro's work to speak to the concerns of anglophone critical geography as I understand it in 2019. The academic and institutional framework in which I write shapes my interpretation of his work, just as much as the lyrical mode of Chico Science's practice shapes his use of Castro, and the respectively academic and political motivations of Santos and Lula structure theirs.

As I outlined in the introduction, it was not until the 1990s that Castro's life and work began to be reassessed. Castro's biography remains a source for scholars interested in not only Brazilian, but international histories of thought and practice. There are many more routes that could be taken, and archives that could be explored. For example, the early period of Castro's career was dominated by concerns with nutrition, and additional research could help expose the international emergence of that discipline, as well as its colonial histories. Castro's work at the FAO remains an important period not only in his life, but in the history of world food policy. The substantial archives of the FAO council, and the events around the emergence and fading away of radical food policy in the decades after the Second World War, remain to be explored from the perspective of political ecology or historical geography. Castro was heavily involved in a number of organizations which can be understood as proto-NGOs, not least ASCOFAM, a campaign against hunger with branches in Brazil, France, Canada and elsewhere. How these international networks functioned, how they related to state policies and actions on food, and how they play into histories of environmental action and international development all remained beyond the scope of this thesis. Relatedly, Castro was an important part of movements for peace, world government, world citizenship and internationalist governance. Little geographical work exists on the histories of these projects, in particular as the foundation for historical geographies of peace. Castro's – and Milton Santos', and Stuart Hall's – engagement with UNESCO also calls for further research.

There are, therefore, many other possible research trajectories which could emerge from Castro's biography. The contribution I have made, however, has focussed on the history, theory and praxis of geography and political ecology. As Karl Offen argued in 2004, 'historical analysis has been central to political ecology since the emergence of the approach in geography in the 1970s and 1980s'¹⁶⁷, not least including work on Brazil by scholars such as Susanna Hecht¹⁶⁸. While far from unified, there has been a rich field of work in political ecology which has analysed nature-society relations in the past¹⁶⁹. My work has drawn on some of the same approaches – particularly in Chapter Two – but has progressed with slightly different priorities, drawn in particular from work in the history of ideas and the history of geography. As Offen noted, 'historical political ecology does not fit comfortably as a subset of historical geography. A majority of historical geography does not explicitly seek to link its topics of inquiry to social or environmental issues in the present. This is changing and hopefully historical political ecologists and historical geographers will find more common ground in the future'¹⁷⁰. This thesis is part of laying out such common ground. My research has involved working through the structures of one part of geographical enquiry to contribute to another, with the purpose of expanding the discipline's conceptual frameworks. This has, I hope, enabled a number of fresh insights and new directions for research in political ecology, the history of geography, and critical geography more broadly. Before outlining the key interventions of each chapter I want to make three inter-connected arguments for the overarching value of the approach of this thesis. Firstly, to emphasize its position in relation to anti-colonial intellectual histories in geographical research and teaching, secondly, its status as a contribution to global intellectual history, and thirdly its implications for future work in political ecology.

An influential branch of political ecology, inspired by decolonial and Black feminist thought, has opened up a path to making the anticolonial central to the discipline's analytical procedures and intellectual frameworks¹⁷¹. In this mould, Castro is a productive intellectual forbear: putting the anticolonial into political ecology is also a task for intellectual and disciplinary history. Guthman¹⁷², like Watts and many others, has described political ecology as emerging from the work of Blaikie and Brookfield on soil science in the 1980s. As this thesis has attempted to show, this genealogy for political ecology is foreshortened. A broader, more open intellectual history can be rerouted through Latin America to unravel different sequences of explanation. Castro's work is one strand of a distinctive

¹⁶⁷ Offen, 'Historical Political Ecology', 21.

¹⁶⁸ eg Hecht, 'Environment, Development and Politics'; Hecht and Cockburn, *The Fate of the Forest*.

¹⁶⁹ eg Bell, 'Historical Political Ecology of Water'; Thompson, 'What I Believe'; Davis, *Historical Approaches to Political Ecology*.

¹⁷⁰ Offen, 'Historical Political Ecology', 22.

¹⁷¹ Heynen, 'Urban Political Ecology II'.

¹⁷² Guthman, *Weighing In*.

history of environmental thinking in Latin America whose relationship with European thought is one of interrelation, cooptation, and transformation. This thesis, therefore, draws attention to the relational history of counter-hegemonic thinking in the twentieth century. Indeed, Leff and Porto-Gonçalves have posited that Latin America has a claim to be the most significant site of all for the development of political ecology¹⁷³. Attention to alternative, Latin American intellectual histories is part of a passage towards decolonizing geography, and analysing Castro's life and work is one step along this path.

One of this thesis' claims to value is straightforward: the history of geography has too often been told with white, European or North American men at its centre¹⁷⁴. It is high time to expand the discipline's transnational and polylingual sense of itself. Quite evidently – as the literature and resources cited in this thesis have hopefully made very clear – my work is not unique in this regard, but part of a much wider collective endeavour. However, the angle at which I come to this project helps offer something new: a biographical approach that broadens the history of geography to include anticolonial thought, praxis and lives from the south. Analysing and writing about lives can function as a set of tools to enable geographers to tell a broader story about the discipline, its inheritances, and its lines of inquiry. This approach has involved following sets of connections between places and histories of knowledge. Whether in terms of the associations between Castro's urban geography and Recife, between the broader Northeast and the idea of the region, or between Vincennes and histories of political ecology, this approach posits umbilical and mobile, but undetermined, relationships between space, social relations and knowledge production. There is much more work to be done in thinking through the geographical, political and epistemological implications of these claims, but this thesis has laid out the beginnings of such enquiry.

I have consistently positioned this thesis within the broad field of political ecology, in spite of its clear relevance and debt to a number of other fields of geographical thinking, from the postcolonial, to the history of geography and historical geography. I retain the tenets of political ecology because I understand Castro's work to be profoundly committed to a political understanding of socio-ecological relations. The implications for future work in political ecology are two-fold. Firstly, I hope the thesis serves as an example for building more bridges between Latin American intellectual history and Anglophone political ecology. Secondly, it offers a number of contributions to the methodology (historical, biographical) and theory (the corporeal, the regional) of political ecology. It suggests that work to expand, consolidate and complicate political ecology can, as this thesis has, draw on a wide set of intellectual resources.

¹⁷³ Porto-Gonçalves and Leff, 'Political Ecology in Latin America'.

¹⁷⁴ See, for instance, Charles Mayhew's first chapter in the Agnew and Livingstone, *The SAGE Handbook of Geographical Knowledge*, or indeed, the front cover of Martin, *All Possible Worlds*.

In Chapter One, I emphasized that the history of critical geographical thought is tangled up with histories of humanism. I showed how Josué de Castro's geographical methodology and geographical politics was inseparable from his commitment to a reformulated humanism aligned with the project of liberating the peoples of the Third World. This focus on humanism is, I hope, a significant contribution to contemporary geographical work which positions itself within, against, or beyond various kinds of post-, trans-, or anti-humanisms. The intersections between histories of radical humanism and histories of radical geography are productive areas of enquiry. So too are the histories of nutritional science, and its intersection with histories of agriculture, which I explored through Castro's work. I showed how Castro himself moved, at the level of both theory and praxis, from a nutritional to a geographical methodology, and how this shift continues to be a powerful challenge to geographies of the body, food and hunger. My analysis suggests that geographies of nutrition, agriculture and food could be more closely integrated.

Castro's urban geography, analysed and contextualized in Chapter Two, emerged in a patchwork of texts across his life. I sought to place Castro's work deeply in its context of the city of Recife, understood both as a site of historical urban environmental transformation, and a site of geographical knowledge production and theory-making. By doing so I showed the theoretical potential of Castro's work – particularly the concept of amphibiousness – to enable fresh analyses of urban space and nature. In particular, I argued that attending to processes of urban dispossession should examine not only – as Ananya Roy insists¹⁷⁵ – the racialization of space, but the racialization of urban nature. In Chapter Two, also, I argued that the history of the landscape idea is situated in particular historical geographies, not least those of the Northeast of Brazil. Contesting that landscape ideas have their own colonial histories is to draw attention to the long history of epistemic exchange embedded in geographical thought across the Atlantic. Furthermore I presented a historical geography of Recife's urban landscape and infrastructure understood as intrinsically relational: they emerged in direct articulation with North Atlantic infrastructures in Europe. This relational history functioned in both material terms – the export of sugar from one port was contingent on the structure of other ports, and flows of finance capital and trade between them – and epistemic terms, as engineers and surveyors criss-crossed the Atlantic to construct Atlantic infrastructures of export and import.

In Chapter Three I used Castro's work and biography to make a different kind of intervention, into the history of geography. By exploring the publication, translation and reception of Castro's work I argued that analysis of the history of geography could attend in more detail to the mobility of ideas, and more precisely to the historical and philological questions of translation. This intervention takes further work in the history of geography that is premised on analysis of the movement of knowledge. In reflecting

¹⁷⁵ Roy, 'Dis/Possessive Collectivism'.

on the twenty-fifth anniversary of his *The Geographical Tradition*, Livingstone himself intimated that the process of translation of his own work ‘made [him] far more aware of the need for careful attention to the practices of translation in the circulation of knowledge’¹⁷⁶. This is an important realization on the part of probably the most influential anglophone historian of geographical thought. While there has been some interest in questions of translation in geography, my analysis has showed that this lens changes our conception of how geographical ideas have developed, how processes of canonization and readership function and how historiography of the discipline must take account of the mobility of ideas, and the material and intellectual frictions through which they travel. The forms by which this mobility and friction affect ideas are themselves sources of theoretical insight. So too, I argue, are the interstices between languages. Geographical theory-making can proceed through the complex, grounded and highly theorized practice of translation. The movement of the idea of the *geografia da fome* out of Portuguese and into other languages is attended by theoretical potential. For instance, drawing on the language Castro used, what does a *geografia da alimentação* – an alimentary geography – offer to contemporary anglophone work on food and hunger? It presupposes, I suggest, an attention to the specific somatic needs of diet as well as the practiced, necessarily social functions of feeding. It is by thinking through translation that we can raise such questions for geographical enquiry.

In the second half of the thesis I analysed the intellectual history of the Northeast of Brazil through the lens of Josué de Castro’s life. This took me both to, and far beyond, the Northeast itself. I argued that the history of critical thought from the Northeast offers new formulations for political ecology at the scale of the region. Not only through the region’s material history, but how that history was interpreted by the Northeast’s thinkers in the mid-twentieth century. I suggest that the scale of the region is one which cannot be overlooked, and must be historicized, in political ecology. In Chapter Four I opened up some of the ways in which the intellectual history of the Northeast can contribute to Gramscian geographies. Much further work – in particular through analysis of the writing and praxis of Francisco de Oliveira, as well as of the dependency school – could expand and deepen this contribution.

In Chapter Five I brought together the analyses of Chapter Three and Chapter Four to consider the geographies of Josué de Castro’s intellectual practice. I argued that thinking about Castro as a public intellectual makes a contribution to assessment of the public role of geography, and its status as a discipline. The problematic of why Castro – as a high profile left-wing intellectual at a particular moment in twentieth century history – has not been made part of the international history of critical geography leads me to question how geography has conceived of itself. Castro’s biography, I argue, gives new angles on the scales and forms by which intellectual work is, or becomes, political praxis in

¹⁷⁶ Livingstone in Craggs et al., ‘Intervention: Reappraising David Livingstone’s *The Geographical Tradition: A Quarter of a Century On*’.

specific historical geographies. This analysis contributes, I suggest, an expanded framework and an alternative historical context for the tasks and antinomies of being a public geographical intellectual.

One of the central contributions of the final Chapter, Chapter Six, is methodological. Castro's archive yielded a potent set of documents – many fragmentary – with which to reconstruct an important episode in the history of critical geography, through analysis of the geography department at Vincennes. By putting these fragments at the front of my research I was able to show not only how an important passage in the history of political ecology developed, but also to place teaching, collaboration and institutional practice within the frame of the history of geography¹⁷⁷. This enabled substantive historical interventions, demonstrating the centrality of a Southern scholar to the development of geographical thought in a Northern institution, counteracting arguments that it is not possible to tell disciplinary histories of geography from the South, or indeed that it was not possible to do so in 1980s¹⁷⁸.

The chapter also brought to light the way in which Third Worldist critiques of Malthusian thought were a constant presence in the emergence of international environmentalism. Castro's work, and the dynamics of Stockholm 1972, should complicate research that places North American opposition to Malthusian demography at the roots of political ecology. Such opposition was at least equally a question of post-colonial and anti-colonial critiques of Malthusian environmental thought. Such critiques were not brought by Northern scholars to Southern contexts: Malthusianism never went unchallenged.

Castro is only one of a much, much wider group of Southern scholars and activists who have been overlooked by Northern geographical scholarship. I have tried, while remaining committed to a deep exploration of Castro's life and work, to introduce some other significant figures: Enrique Dussel and his colleagues' approach to the philosophy of liberation could be the subject of extremely fruitful enquiry in radical geography; Paulo Freire's work is relatively well known in general terms, and is hugely influential in radical pedagogy, but its potential for Marxist political ecology remains unexplored. There are any number of other examples that could be outlined.

As a whole, then, the thesis offers an alternative intellectual history of critical geography. It insists that who counts as a geographer, and what counts as geography, is not curtailed to Northern scholars, neither in the present, nor in the past. Aligned with movements and scholarship aiming to decolonize the history of geography¹⁷⁹, and with accounts of the history of geography which emphasize the contributions and significance of many different actors in the development of geographical knowledge – from indigenous

¹⁷⁷ See Sharp, 'Practising Subalternity'.

¹⁷⁸ Counteracting arguments that it is not possible to tell disciplinary histories of geography from the South, or indeed that it was not possible to do so in 1980s, as Livingstone implies in Craggs et al., 'Intervention: Reappraising David Livingstone's The Geographical Tradition: A Quarter of a Century On'.

¹⁷⁹ Craggs in Craggs et al.

guides to female explorers¹⁸⁰ – this thesis has demonstrated that the history of twentieth century geographical thought is transnational, polylingual and mobile. I hope to administer, therefore, a historical dose of hope and optimism to scholars seeking an anti-colonial geography to pit against the history and present of colonial and imperialist geographical practices. Josué de Castro's theory and praxis were varied, fluctuating and at times internally incoherent. But they were held together by a profound counter-hegemonic commitment to make the world differently in the pursuit of equality and universal freedom from suffering. This commitment was organized around a lifelong struggle against hunger at all its scales. It proceeded through a geographical interpretation of the world, and an equally lifelong engagement with the disciplinary practices of geographical work. This geographical work manifested both inside institutions of higher education, through research and through teaching, but also through the countless forms of political activism and representational practice by which Castro sought to turn his geographical worldview into an agent of social and environmental transformation. Geography and political ecology do need an anti-colonial impetus, and they do need to be constantly re-invented as emancipatory practices, but many resources for this re-invention are in geography's own history. If we have had enough of the legacies of 'geography militant'¹⁸¹, and we have, we can always reach, instead, for Castro's militant geography.

¹⁸⁰ Maddrell, 'Scientific Discourse and the Geographical Work of Marion Newbigin'; Maddrell, 'The "Map Girls". British Women Geographers' War Work, Shifting Gender Boundaries and Reflections on the History of Geography'.

¹⁸¹ Driver, *Geography Militant*.

Appendixes

Timeline of Josué de Castro's Life

[Derived from Chronology drawn up by Teresa Cristina Wanderley Neves¹⁸²]

1908 – Born 5th September in Recife, only son of Manuel Apolônia de Castro, small-scale landowner and tradesman, and Josefa de Castro, teacher.

1923 – Began medical studies aged 15 in Bahia

1925 – Moved to Rio de Janeiro. Published first articles in the press, on Freud and Literature

1929 – Qualified as a Doctor at the National Faculty of Medicine at the University of Brazil. Travelled to Mexico.

1930 – Returned to Recife. Established Nutritional Clinic in the city.

1930-32 – Worked as factory doctor in Recife and conducted research leading to *As Condições de Vida das Classes Operárias do Recife*

1933 – Became professor of Human Geography at Faculty of Philosophy and Social Sciences in Recife

1934 – Married Glauce Roge Pinto. Went on to have three children: Josué Fernando de Castro (economist), Anna Maria de Castro (sociologist), and Sônia de Castro Duval (geographer).

1935 – Became professor of Anthropology at the University of Federal District, Rio de Janeiro

1935 – Campaigns on Minimum Wage

1936 – Member of Commission of Inquiry into the Study of Brazilian Diet, organized by the National Department of Health

1939 – Worked at Biochemical Institute in Rome and invited to give Conferences on Tropical Nutrition in Italy

1939 – Helped found the *Serviço Central de Alimentação* (Central Feeding Service), which later becomes the *Serviço de Alimentação de Previdência Social* (SAPS, The Social Security Food Service), of which is the first Director

1940 – Became Professor of Human Geography in the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Brazil, a post he holds until 1964

1942 – Official visit to Argentina to study nutritional science

1942 – Founder-President of the *Sociedade Brasileira de Nutrição* (Brazilian Nutrition Society)

¹⁸² Neves, 'Josué de Castro: Cronologia'.

- 1944 – Founded Instituto de Tecnologia Alimentar (ITA, Institute for Food Technology) in Rio de Janeiro
- 1945 – Travelled to Mexico and Dominican Republic. Helped found major hospital - *Hospital de Clínicas* – in Rio
- 1946 – Published *Geografia da Fome*
- 1947 – Became member of Permanent Consultative Committee on Nutrition at the FAO
- 1948 – Delegate to the First FAO Latin American conference on nutrition
- 1950 – Helped organize Second FAO Latin American conference on nutrition in Petrópolis
- 1951 – Nominated Vice-President of National Commission on Agrarian Reform
- 1952 – Elected President of FAO Council. Re-elected 1954. Held post until 1956
- 1954 – Received International Peace Prize
- 1955 – Received French *Legion d'Honneur*. Elected Federal Deputy for Pernambuco. Held post until 1962
- 1956 – Elected President of the Governmental Committee of UN Campaign Against Hunger.
- 1957 – Founder-President of *Associação Mundial Contra a Fome* (ASCOFAM, World Campaign against Hunger). Travelled to China and gave Conference at Instituto Superior de Estudos Brasileiros (ISEB, Superior Institute of Brazilian Studies) on China. Travelled to Canada at invitation of Bertrand Russell to take part in Disarmament Conference. Became part of (later Vice-President) pro-National Development Parliamentary grouping in Brazilian Congress.
- 1958 – Nominated, ultimately unsuccessfully, for Minister of Agriculture. Re-elected in Pernambuco.
- 1959 – Major drought in the Northeast
- 1960 – Gave ISEB Conference on Brazil and National Development
- 1962 – Appointed Brazilian Ambassador to the UN. Moved to Geneva
- 1963 – Nominated for Nobel Peace Prize
- 1964 – Exiled and Stripped of Civil and Political Rights by Brazilian Government. Moved to Paris
- 1965 – Founder-President of the *Centre International pour le Développement* (CID), Paris
- 1968 – Became Professor at University of Vincennes
- 1973 – Died in Paris, aged 65. Buried in the São João Batista cemetery, Rio de Janeiro

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